THE BOOK OF PSALMS

C. G. MONTEFIORE

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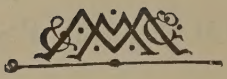

THE BOOK OF PSALMS

EDITED

WITH COMMENTS AND REFLECTIONS FOR THE USE OF JEWISH PARENTS AND CHILDREN

BY

C. G. MONTEFIORE

JEWISH MEMORIAL COUNCIL.

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PREFACE

I HAVE thought that a separate edition at a low price of the chapters containing the Psalms in the second part of my *Bible for Home Reading* might be useful for those who do not want, or cannot easily afford, to buy the volume as a whole. The present little book is a mere reprint without any alterations; even the pagination of the original has not been changed. But I hope that by its means the Book of Psalms may find its way into many a Jewish home, and into the hands of many Jewish youths and maidens, who are still unfamiliar with it whether in the original or in a translation. This book is not, I admit, a complete Psalter, but it contains 121 Psalms out of 150, and, as I venture to think, all the best and noblest psalms are included. The indexes show the arrangement, and on what page any particular psalm is to be found.

April, 1901.

SECTION IV

THE BOOK OF PSALMS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

§ 1. *The origin of the Psalter.*—Another and a very different form of literature will come before us in the present section: a fresh example of the great variety of religious writings contained in that wonderful collection of books which we call the Bible. For this section is to be dedicated to the Psalms. And the Psalms present us with a phase of religious thought and expression unlike the utterances of sage and prophet and story-teller to which we have already listened. A few Psalms have already been given at the end of Part I and in the story of David; these will now find their proper place among their fellows, and be gladly read again by all who read them before.

The Book of Psalms has been most succinctly defined as 'a collection of religious and devotional poetry. It is made up mainly of prayers and songs of praise, with a certain number of didactic pieces.' The total number of Psalms is 150. The Hebrew name for the book is *Tehillim*, and means 'Praises' or 'Songs of Praise.' And the name expresses the purpose for which the three or four collections that now compose the Psalter were originally made. After the reforms of Ezra, the services of the Temple of Jerusalem became more and more carefully and elaborately organized. These services comprised not only sacrifice, but song. And gradually the songs were almost as systematically arranged for as the sacrifices. Before the Babylonian captivity, it would seem that such singing as took place in the Temple worship was not officially organized. Various references in pre-exilic literature, as well as the total lack of any allusion to Psalms or to trained choirs, make it highly probable that such music as accompanied the sacrifices did not proceed from 'officers of the Temple, but rather from the worshippers at large,' while what we hear of the singing

'suggests the untrained efforts of the congregation rather than the disciplined music of a temple choir.' But after the return, or more accurately after Ezra, the Temple music was no longer left to the uncertain outbursts of the worshipping throng. Guilds of singers were established and trained, and the musical part of the services became as important, and perhaps as elaborate, as in a modern cathedral.

These singers needed songs—hymns, as we should now call them. The services of the Temple were, in one sense, the expression of the national life, and it was natural that the songs should vary with the changing feelings of the nation and its leader. In days of sorrow and affliction, hymns of petition and penitence were in place; in days of gladness and prosperity, hymns of rejoicing and gratitude. And on all days praises, praises of God whose loving-kindness, though sometimes seemingly veiled, was yet abiding and certain.

Who wrote these varying hymns? We cannot tell. Some the singers doubtless wrote themselves; others were written for them. Others, again, and these perhaps the oldest, had been written by this private person or that, as an expression of his own longings and piety, or more often as the vocal utterance of a heart which beat in unison with the highest aspirations and deepest sorrows of Israel. Such existing hymns might be adopted and even adapted for Temple usage.

Collections were made, added to and added together. Psalms were inserted in these collections, not all of which perhaps were used or capable of use in the Temple services. In these collections they were given a place of refuge and of preservation. As Professor Wellhausen succinctly puts it: 'The Psalms are a collection of hymns for use in public worship. Only a small proportion, however, were composed expressly for this use. Some are of a secular nature (e.g. Ps. xlv), some give lyrical expression to the thoughts of an individual (e.g. Pss. iii and iv); but all were received into the collection to promote the edification of the congregation. The Psalter is the hymn-book of the second Temple.' Some scholars would emend this statement by the omission of the word 'small.'

§ 2. *The collections which make up the Psalter.*—Our present Book of Psalms contains three main 'collections.' The first collection is the oldest and contains the oldest Psalms, though it is very doubtful whether even any of these are older than the Exile. It extends from Ps. i to Ps. xli. Some much later Psalms may have been inserted by later editors or copyists into this earliest collection.

The second collection extends from Ps. xlii to Ps. lxxxix. It is itself made up of at least two minor collections with a supplement. Into the details I have no space to enter.

The third collection begins at Ps. xc and goes down to the end of the book. On the whole, the Psalms of this the latest collection are 'marked by a liturgical character more predominant than in the other books.'

At a later period the whole number of Psalms was divided up afresh to form five books or divisions corresponding with the five books or divisions of the Pentateuch. The first book corresponds with the limits of the original first collection (i–xli). The second collection was split up to form the second and third books (xlii–lxxii; lxxiii-lxxxix). Similarly the third collection forms the fourth and fifth books (xc-cvi; cvii–cl).

We do not precisely know when the last collection was made. But we can be tolerably certain that *its* date and the date when it was added on to the first and second collections were not separated by many years, and that both dates lie far on in the post-exilic period. For, if on the one hand, it is doubtful whether any of our present Psalms in their present form reach *back* to before the Exile, it is, on the other hand, almost certain that the latest of them reach *forward* to the second century before the Christian era, and more particularly to the epoch of the Maccabees. In the 300 years which extend from the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah to the Maccabean revolt by far the greater portion of the Psalter was written. Let me add here that the Greek-speaking Jews called the poems with which we are here concerned *Psalmoi*, or songs; hence our word Psalms. *Psalmos* meant originally the music to which a song was set: secondarily it was used for a song set or sung to music. And as the Greek *Psalterion*, properly a stringed instrument, was used 'metaphorically for a collection of such songs or poems,' so our word Psalter is used as an equivalent for the Book of Psalms.

§ 3. *King David and the Psalter.*—Nearly half of our 150 Psalms have in Hebrew the superscription *Mizmor le-David*, which is commonly translated a Psalm of David (*Mizmor*, like *Psalmos*, is supposed to mean a song set or sung to music). It is not certain that this translation is accurate. Except in this and similar superscriptions the Hebrew preposition '*le*' is never used to indicate the author or maker of anything. Perhaps originally the phrase *Mizmor le-David* had a musical or liturgical meaning which was gradually forgotten. So thinks Professor Cornill. But even in Biblical times—for example, in the age of the man who

wrote the Books of Chronicles—the words *Mizmor le-David* were taken to mean a Psalm written by David.

These Davidic Psalms occur mainly in the first and second collections. In the first collection every Psalm but four bears the Davidic superscription; in the second collection, out of twenty-two consecutive Psalms, eighteen are so superscribed. In the supplement to that second collection there is one. In the third collection, out of a total of sixty-one Psalms, seventeen are Davidic; but these do not form a group by themselves, and are perhaps the most indisputably post-Davidic of all the seventy-three. In their case, as Professor Robertson-Smith said, 'the only possible question for the critic is whether all these titles rest on editorial conjecture, or whether some of the Psalms exemplify the habit, so common in later Jewish literature, of writing in the name of ancient worthies.'

The Davidic Psalms in the first and second collections of the Psalter are in a somewhat different position. They were probably from the first collected together as Davidic Psalms, and perhaps the superscription which each one now bears separately formed originally a title for the whole group. But even in their case the value of the superscription is small. External and internal evidences of various kinds combine to make it excessively unlikely, either that David could have written such poems as these, or that these poems go back anything like as far as the Davidic age. I have briefly indicated in Part I (chapter x) how David's character and work became idealized in later ages, and how, known and celebrated in his own times as a famous singer and musician, he became regarded as the founder and framer of the national psalmody, just as Moses became regarded as the founder and framer of the national laws. Originally the words *Mizmor le-David* had probably a far closer reference to David as a musician than to David as a poet. Professor Robertson-Smith says rightly that 'though the old histories do not speak of David as a Psalm-writer, they dwell on his musical skill, and we are told how he danced and played before the ark as it was brought up with joy to Jerusalem. Dancing, music and song were in early times the united expression of lyrical inspiration, and the sacred melodies were still conjoined with dances at the time of the latest Psalms. We have every right, therefore, to conclude that the talents of Israel's most gifted singer were not withheld from the service of Jehovah, which king David placed high above all considerations of royal dignity. On the other hand, a curious passage of the Book of Amos, "They devise for themselves instruments of music like David," makes

David the chosen model of the dilettanti nobles of Samaria, who lay stretched on beds of ivory, anointed with the choicest perfumes, and mingling music with their cups in the familiar fashion of Oriental luxury. These two views of David as a musician are not irreconcilable if we remember that in old Israel' ('old' is inaccurate and unnecessary in this connexion, for in 'new' Israel it has ever been the same) 'religion was not separated from ordinary life, and that the gladness of the believing heart found natural utterance in sportful forms of unconstrained mirth. At a much later date chants for the Temple service were borrowed from the joyous songs of the vintage, and so it was possible that David should give the pattern alike for the melodies of the sanctuary and for the worldly airs of the nobles of Samaria. The sacred music of Israel was of popular origin, and long retained its popular type, and of this music David was taken to be father and great master. The oldest psalmody of the second Temple was still based on the ancient popular and Davidic model, and this seems to be the real reason why the oldest Psalm-book came to be known as "David's." The same name was afterwards extended to the other lay collection of "Prayers of David," while the collections that were formed from the first for use in the Temple were simply named from the Levitical choirs, or in later times bore no distinctive title.' The reference in this last sentence is to the fact that in the second collection eleven Psalms are superscribed 'Psalms for the sons of Korah,' and twelve as 'Psalms of Asaph.' The Korahites and Asaphites seem to have been two hereditary choir guilds, who traced their origin to their two Levitical ancestors. Further details on the subject can be read by the curious in Professor Robertson-Smith's delightful book, *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church* (p. 204, &c.). The only doubtful point in Professor Robertson-Smith's statements seems to be his description of the Davidic collections as emanating from laymen. I should be far more inclined to think that they too were formed by the superintendents and executants of the musical services at the Temple.

§ 4. *Character and contents of the Psalter.*—The titles and even the precise dates of the Psalms have only a minor interest from a religious point of view. From that point of view what interests us most and chiefly is the contents of the Psalter, those wonderful contents that have made it, as Dean Church has rightly said, the one unique book of sacred poetry, 'which has nothing like it or second to it.' 'It expresses,' he goes on to say, 'the ideas and feelings of a religion of which the central

and absorbing object of faith is One who is believed to be the absolute, universal, Living God, the one God of the world and all things, Almighty, All-Holy, Supreme. It not only expresses this religion, but, as a matter of fact, it has been one of the most certain means of maintaining unbroken the tradition or fullest conviction of it. From age to age this book has been its companion and its minister. And there is this to be observed about it. It has been equally and in equal measure the prayer-book of public and common worship, and the chosen treasury of meditation, guidance, comfort to the individual soul. To each of these two purposes, in many respects widely different, it has lent itself with equal suitableness; and it has been to men of the most widely different times and ideas [and races] what no other book has been. Whenever the Book of Psalms began to be put together, and whenever it was completed, from that time in the history of the world the religious affections and the religious emotions, the object of which was the one living God of all, found their final, their deepest, their unsurpassed expression. From that time to this there never has been a momentary pause, when somewhere or other the praises of His glory and the prayers of His worshippers have not been rehearsed in its words.' What the late Dean of St. Paul's has so well said at the opening of his fascinating lecture on the Psalms is true both of the Christian Church and of the Jewish Synagogue. The Jews have ever deeply loved and cherished their own great hymn-book, and they have found in it the adequate response and the satisfying expression for every spiritual aspiration and need, whether in times of sadness or in times of joy, whether as individuals or as a community.

Nor can this intimate familiarity and abiding affection surprise us. What may more justly be called surprising is the wealth and variety of the hymnal itself. For in the Psalter we find almost every mood satisfied and cared for. Do we want to express our gratitude to God for deliverance and prosperity; do we want to pour forth our prayers to him in days of darkness and gloom; do we seek to strengthen our faith in his goodness, our conviction of his final and unquestionable wisdom; do we desire to praise him as the Lord of nature, to extol him as the Ruler of man; do we wish to utter aspirations for the coming of his kingdom upon earth, when all men shall know him as he on earth may best and most truly by us men be known;—where can we find another hymnal in which our would-be prayers, praises and aspirations are more movingly expressed, and on the whole more adequately satisfied, than in the Book of Psalms? National in one sense as the Psalms may be, they nevertheless respond to the fundamental spiritual needs and yearnings of the human heart and soul; and even if the speaker in

every Psalm were proved to be a personification of Israel or the community of believers, these very Psalms would be none the less suitable for individual worshippers and for their own separate relation to the divine Father of all.

It is pleasant too to be able to believe that the Psalter was composed by many hands. It is a truly national book; with its strength and its weakness (for, like all things human, it is not perfect), a genuinely popular product. Here we find a great and notable result from the long teaching of the prophets and the law-givers. Surely Jeremiah did not live and die in vain! For in the Psalter we find the community possessed by that complete faith in one supreme, spiritual God, all-holy, all-righteous, for which prophet and law-giver had laboured so earnestly and so long. And it is not the mere assertion that such a God exists which the Psalter contains; it is no mere cold intellectual belief which pervades it. This faith in the God of righteousness and mercy is a trust and a joy; it dominates life and gives to it its meaning. It sustains in trouble; it adds significance to prosperity. For even in trouble there may be peace if it is believed that God has sent it, and prosperity is spiritualized if God be the giver. In the Psalter communion with God is described in brief touches of wonderful felicity. And this communion with its rapture is the response of the community to the prophetic teaching As a great scholar has finely said, if the highest words of the prophets are the revelation of God to man, the Psalter, with its prayer and praises, with its spiritual faith and spiritual joy, is the answer of man to God. And in the words of another distinguished scholar: In the Psalms the community answers to the demands imposed upon it by God in the Law, and confesses its faith in his promises. Thus the Psalms are the echoing response of the community to the Law and to the Prophets. To the divine command, 'Thou shalt,' it answers, 'Lord, I will, I have pleasure in thy statutes;' to the divine promises, it replies, 'Lord, I wait for thee.'

Prophet and lawgiver had denounced idolatry; they had enjoined a belief in the one true God. The writers of the Psalter do not merely believe in God—that were but little—but to believe in him is their joy, to praise him is their privilege. With them the law is graven on their hearts. Within their limits they all 'know the Lord,' and to serve him is their delight. Nor are the highest aspirations of the prophets without their echo in the Psalter. All nations shall praise God, even as Israel praises him. As we have already heard in that pure lyric of universalism: 'Concerning Zion, it shall be said, each and every one was born in her.'

§ 5. *Arrangement of the present section.*—We have seen that the Psalter, with its 150 separate Psalms, is made up of three distinct collections. Within each of these collections the order of the individual Psalms appears, as Professor Driver says, 'to have been often determined by accidental causes,' though sometimes 'the juxtaposition of two Psalms seems to be due to community of subject, and sometimes also to the occurrence in them of some more or less noticeable expression.' There are even certain small groups of consecutive Psalms in the three collections which can be more or less clearly distinguished through similarity of contents or subject-matter. Moreover, the three main collections themselves have upon the whole certain predominant characteristics of their own. I do not, however, propose in the selections which I shall give from the Psalter in this volume to follow the existing order, or to go through each of the original collections separately. I shall treat the Psalter as a whole, but group the Psalms according to a rough division of subjects. Only one group will be kept as it now exists: it is the group known as Songs of Degrees or Ascents, pilgrimage songs, probably written for worshippers who came up to Jerusalem at the great festivals or on other special occasions. Of the 150 Psalms I shall give about 120. But I shall not *always* quote *all* these Psalms in their entirety. I have said that the Psalter, as a great national and communal hymn-book, reflects not only what was best and greatest in the national and communal religion, but sometimes also its weaknesses and errors. Now we know that one weakness of the Jewish religion in this post-exilic period was its occasional narrowness of vision towards those who were beyond its pale, its fierceness of antagonism towards its enemies, whether within or without the community. This defect is reflected and expressed in the Psalter. Prayers for the ruin of enemies (apostates within or foes without) frequently accompany prayers for aid and deliverance. Curiously enough, these Psalms have often been favourites with pious warriors in all later ages. Where the Psalms are to be historically treated and their value critically assessed, all such passages must be taken into full and fair consideration. But my main object here is to present what is best and most permanent in the Psalter for religious and devotional purposes. Therefore I have occasionally omitted verses which lower the religious value and use of an otherwise noble and excellent Psalm. Let us gain as much as we can from the Psalter; let its greatness shine forth as purely as possible.

CHAPTER II

PSALMS OF PRAYER IN SEASONS OF TROUBLE

§ 1. *Characteristics of the group of Psalms collected together in the present chapter.*—The first group of Psalms which I will print may be described as Psalms of Prayer in seasons of trouble. The trouble may be of varying degrees of intensity and of varying origin and nature. Yet in almost all cases it does not resemble those purely individual sorrows which are perhaps shared by no other human being, or only by a man's family or friends; rather is it national or communal. Intensely felt by the writer who gives expression to it, and who finds relief for his burdened soul in prayer, the 'trouble' is nevertheless not exclusively his own, but is shared by his people or his party. And as his party in the writer's eyes constitutes the true Israel, in which his enemies, even though Israelites, can claim no share, all these Psalms express the nation's sorrows and petitions through the mouth of an individual who feels them perhaps all the more intensely because they are his people's—the sorrows of the people of God—and not merely his own personal and private woes. For Israel's sorrows concern God: they are in themselves religious. Here, as so often before, we touch on that co-ordination of Israel's salvation and the divine glory which always gave strength to the believer but sometimes marred the purity of his faith.

It must be remembered that this description of the first group is only a rough one, just as all divisions of the Psalter into 'subjects' are more or less inaccurate and approximative. For many Psalms are of a mixed character; 'they begin perhaps in a strain of supplication, and as the poet proceeds the confidence that his prayer will be answered grows upon him, and he ends in a tone of jubilant exultation.'

It is noteworthy how large a proportion of the Psalms assigned to this group are taken from the first or second collection.

I include in it thirty-eight Psalms and a half, and of these fifteen and a half belong to the first collection, sixteen to the second, and seven to the third.

§ 2. *The first Psalm: The Two Ways.*—But before we enter on this group, we must listen to the first Psalm of all, which was perhaps written, and at any rate chosen, as an introduction either to the first collection or to the entire Psalter. It may partly owe its place to its opening word '*happy*.' 'The Psalter is the book of spiritual happiness' (Dr. B. Jacob).

Happy is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked,
Nor standeth in the way of sinners,
Nor sitteth in the assembly of the scornful.
But his delight is in the law of the Lord;
And in his law doth he meditate day and night.
For he is like a tree planted by watercourses,
That bringeth forth its fruit in its season,
And whose leaf doth not wither;
And whatsoever he doeth he maketh to prosper.

The wicked are not so:
But they are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.
Therefore the wicked cannot stand in the judgement,
Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.
For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous:
But the way of the wicked shall perish.

'The Lord knoweth.' God 'knows,' that is, he takes an interest in, protects and makes secure the fortunes of the righteous, while the way of life pursued by the wicked ends in disaster and destruction.

The ungodly sinners here referred to are Israelites. The 'law' is pre eminently the Pentateuch, but may also include the other sacred writings known to the writer. The 'judgement' is either the general and constant, or else that final sifting judgement of God which was expected in the Messianic age. The views of the Psalmist are too closely akin to those of Job's friends to be wholly in accordance with our own. Righteousness leads to life and prosperity (in the highest sense of the word); sin leads to dissolution and death. Such is our dogma too. But we cannot say that on earth, at any rate, the righteous always prosper; and we trust that no soul which God has created will perish in its sin.

§ 3. *The third and fourth Psalms.*—The prayerful hymn with which my first group opens is Ps. iii. The speaker is an individual, but his troubles are his people's, or those of the faithful and pious among them. Many Psalms are both individual and communal in one, for the writer uses his own sorrows and sufferings as the motive for a hymn which shall at once express his own feelings and yet (like a true lyric) be capable of wider application. Or, again, he speaks as a leader or member of his community, in whose aspirations and woes he shares. The period during which this Psalm was written was probably one of the many dark moments during the Persian domination, when 'faithful Israelites were so sorely oppressed both by traitors in their midst and by their Persian tyrants' (Cheyne).

Lord, how are they increased that trouble me!
Many are they that rise up against me.
Many there be who say of my soul,
There is no help for him in God.

But thou, O Lord, art a shield around me;
My glory, and the lifter up of mine head.
I cry aloud unto the Lord,
And he heareth me out of his holy hill.

I laid me down and slept;
I have awaked; for the Lord sustaineth me.
I am not afraid of ten thousands of people,
That have set themselves against me round about.

Arise, O Lord; save me, O my God:
For thou hast smitten all mine enemies upon the cheek bone;
Thou hast broken the teeth of the wicked.
Help belongeth unto the Lord:
Thy blessing be upon thy people.

To a morning succeeds an evening hymn (iv). The Psalmist is confronted by weaklings in faith within his own community. They despond amid misfortune. The period is probably the same as before. But the Psalmist knows a higher joy than mere material prosperity—the assurance of divine protection, the conviction of God's lovingkindness.

Hear me when I call, O God of my right:
Thou hast enlarged me when I was in distress;

Have mercy upon me, and hear my prayer.
O ye sons of men, how long will ye be hard of heart?
Wherefore will ye love vanity, and seek after falsehood?
But know that the Lord hath shewn me marvellous loving-kindness,
The Lord heareth when I call unto him.

Tremble, and sin not:
Consider in your own heart upon your bed, and be still (?).
Offer the sacrifices of righteousness,
And put your trust in the Lord.

There be many that say, 'Who will shew us prosperity?'
Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us.
Thou hast put more gladness in my heart,
Than when their corn and new wine are increased.
I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep:
For thou, Lord, alone makest me dwell in safety.

A Rabbinic commentary on the words, 'Consider in your own heart upon your bed,' says: 'God spake to Israel: I said to thee, When thou prayest, pray in the synagogue which is in thy town, or if thou canst not pray there, pray in thy field, and if thou canst not pray there, pray in thy house, and if thou canst not pray there, pray in thy bed, and if thou canst not pray there, "consider in thy heart."'

§ 4. *The fifth Psalm: A morning hymn.*—The next Psalm (v) is once more a morning hymn. The enemies are Israelites: the writer is the spokesman of his party.

Give ear to my words, O Lord,
Consider my sighing.
Hearken unto the voice of my cry, my King and my God:
For unto thee do I pray.

My voice dost thou hear in the morning, O Lord;
In the morning I set in order my prayer unto thee, and look out.
For thou art not a God that hath pleasure in wickedness:
Evil may not dwell with thee.
Boasters may not stand in thy sight:
Thou hatest all workers of iniquity.

Thou destroyest them that speak falsehood:
The Lord abhorreth the bloody and deceitful man.

But I, through the greatness of thy lovingkindness, can enter thine house,
And in the fear of thee I can worship toward thy holy temple.
Lead me, O Lord, in thy righteousness because of mine enemies;
Make thy way level before my face.
For there is no truthfulness in their mouth;
Their inward part is ruin;
Their throat is an open sepulchre;
They deceive with their tongue.

Hold them guilty, O God;
Let them fall by their own counsels;
Cast them down through the multitude of their transgressions;
For they have rebelled against thee.
Then shall all those that take refuge in thee rejoice:
They shall ever shout for joy, because thou defendest them;
They that love thy name will be joyful in thee.
For thou, Lord, blessest the righteous;
With favour as with a diadem dost thou crown him.

'Because of mine enemies.' Professor Wellhausen's note is, as usual, concise and instructive. 'Because they are God's enemies too, and his cause, as well as the petitioner's, is at stake. The godly man cannot claim deliverance because of his own merits; but, compared with the wicked man, he is, at all events, the one who inquires after God. And God cannot but show that such a one is more precious to him than a man who does not desire to know him. We have here a strongly marked contrast between two parties within the community, the godly and the wicked. The man who is praying, speaks in the name of the true Israel; hence *my king*: Jehovah is the King of Israel. Convinced that the wicked will not be allowed to continue to dwell with Jehovah, he looks forward with longing to the judgement which will sweep them away, and bring about the triumph of the godly in Zion.'

One cannot help wondering whether the party opposed to the Psalmist was indeed so wicked as he would make out. There have been few religious leaders, and fewer religious founders, who have not failed to understand the point of view of their adversaries. Many of them have indeed been spiritually or

morally superior to the great majority of their antagonists, but yet all their antagonists were certainly not that mass of corruption and hypocrisy which the leaders and founders, no doubt honestly enough, believed them to be. But none the less may we suppose that within their own party the lives of the Psalmists were noble and pure, and that their yearning for righteousness and their love of God were unfeigned and sincere.

The opening of the third paragraph of this Psalm is prettily expanded in Sir Philip Sidney's metrical version:—

'But I myself will to thy house address
With passport of thy graces manifold;
And in thy fear, knees of my heart will fold
Towards the temple of thy holiness.

Thou Lord, thou Lord, the Saviour of thine own,
Guide me, O in thy justice be my guide;
And make thy ways to me more plainly known,
For all I need, that with such foes do bide.'

§ 5. *The sixth Psalm.*—In the next Psalm (vi) the gloom deepens. The sickness is a metaphor for sorrows, and the speaker, one with his community, 'feels their sins and sufferings as his own.' Professor Cheyne supposes that this and kindred Psalms 'may refer either to the slavery into which the Jews were brought for seven years by Bagoses, or to that other outburst of Persian fury under Artaxerxes Ochus, when Jewish captives were carried away to Egypt, Babylonia, and even Hyrcania.'

O Lord, rebuke me not in thine anger,
Neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.
Have mercy upon me, O Lord; for I am sick;
O Lord, heal me; for my bones are confounded.
My soul also is sore confounded:
But thou, O Lord, how long?

Return, O Lord, deliver my soul:
Oh save me for thy lovingkindness' sake.
For in death there is no remembrance of thee:
In Sheol who shall give thee thanks?
I am weary with my groaning;
All the night make I my bed to swim;
I water my couch with my tears.
Mine eye is consumed because of sorrow:
It waxeth old because of all mine enemies.

Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity;
For the Lord hath heard the voice of my weeping.
The Lord hath heard my supplication;
The Lord will receive my prayer.
All mine enemies shall be ashamed and sore confounded:
They shall be ashamed right suddenly.

'My bones are confounded.' This and similar expressions are metaphors for any kind of suffering.

'The Lord hath heard.' 'The confidence now expressed does not contradict the lamentation which has been already uttered. Nor does it indicate a change in the state of affairs. He who sets forth his lamentation before God is already confident that help will be found in him' (Wellhausen).

'They shall be ashamed.' 'Ashamed' here, as frequently, means 'disconcerted,' 'disappointed.'

§ 6. *Psalms eleven, twelve, thirteen and seventeen.*—The Psalmist speaks again (xi) as the leader or representative of his party—the strong in faith, who stay at their post and trust in God. A wise friend of mine, who sent me a suggested classification of the Psalter, put this Psalm with some thirty others under the heading, Psalms of *Trust*. But Psalms of Trust are also Psalms of Prayer, for only he can pray who trusts, and it is the trustful who pray.

In the Lord I take my refuge: how say ye then to me:
'Flee quickly like a bird.
For, lo, the wicked bend their bow,
They make ready their arrow upon the string,
That they may shoot in the darkness at the upright in heart.
If the pillars be destroyed,
What can the righteous do?'

The Lord in his holy temple,
The Lord whose throne is in heaven,
His eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men.
The Lord trieth the righteous:
But the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth.
Upon the wicked he shall rain coals of fire and brimstone,
A burning wind shall be the portion of their cup.

For the Lord is righteous; he loveth righteousness;
The upright shall behold his face.

'The upright shall behold his face.' A metaphorical expression to indicate the fullest measure of divine grace and of spiritual happiness. We shall meet with the idea again.

The next Psalm (xii) represents the party of piety as a mere remnant amid a crowd of mocking oppressors. The true Israelites are frequently identified in the Psalter with the poor, the afflicted and the needy. On the other hand, we do not find denunciations of the rich *quâ* rich. In this Psalm too we find an early use of *Chasid* as a party term. The *Chasid* is the man who shows *Chesed*, or lovingkindness, to his fellow-man, even as God shows *Chesed* to him. The term, as Professor Cheyne says, is untranslatable in English. The 'loving,' the 'pious,' the 'godly,' are all more or less inapposite and inaccurate. (With a slight correction of the text, Professor Wellhausen would render the first two lines, 'Help me, O Lord; love is clean gone, and faithfulness vanished from men.')

Help, Lord; for the godly man is no more;
For the faithful have ceased from among the children of men.
They speak falsehood every one with his neighbour:
With flattering lips and with a double heart do they speak.

May the Lord cut off all flattering lips,
And the tongue that speaketh proud things:
Who say, 'Through our tongue will we prevail;
Our lips are our own: who is lord over us?'

'For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy,
Now will I arise,' saith the Lord;
'I will set him in safety that panteth towards me.' (?)
The words of the Lord are pure words:
As smelted silver, as gold purified seven times.

The wicked walk on every side,
When vileness is exalted among the sons of men: (?)
Thou wilt keep us, O Lord.
Thou wilt preserve us from this generation for ever.

In the following Psalm (xiii), which belongs still to the same period and group, the speaker is again a representative of his persecuted party. Note the fine transition from heavy complaint to the joyful assurance of faith.

How long wilt thou for ever forget me, O Lord?
  How long wilt thou hide thy face from me?
How long shall I lay up sorrows in my soul,
  And have trouble in my heart day by day?
  How long shall mine enemy be exalted over me?
Look and hear me, O Lord my God:
  Lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death;
Lest mine enemy say, 'I have prevailed against him';
  And those that trouble me rejoice that I am moved.
But as for me, I trust in thy lovingkindness;
  My heart shall rejoice in thy salvation.
  I will sing unto the Lord, because he hath dealt bountifully with me.

From the next Psalm (xvii) some verses have been omitted. The text is frequently corrupt and uncertain.

Hear my right, O Lord, attend unto my cry,
  Give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips.
Let my sentence come forth from thy presence;
  Thine eyes see uprightly.
If thou provest mine heart and visitest my reins;
  Yea, if thou triest me, thou wilt find no evil thought;
  My mouth doth not transgress. (?) . . .
By the word of thy lips
  I have kept me from the paths of the spoiler.
My goings have held fast unto thy paths,
  My footsteps have not slipped.

I call upon thee, for thou wilt hear me, O God:
  Incline thine ear unto me, and hear my speech.
Shew thy marvellous lovingkindness,
  O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust in thee
  From those that rise up against them.
Keep me as the apple of the eye,
  Hide me under the shadow of thy wings,
From the wicked that oppress me,
  From my deadly enemies that compass me about.
As for me, I shall behold thy face in righteousness:
  I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thine image. (?)

The last line is exceedingly obscure. Perhaps the text is faulty. Some have seen in it a reference to a future life, but this is

improbable. For the speaker is Israel or the pious community. Others suppose that the night, from which the Psalmist will 'awake,' is the darkness of calamity—the awakening is at the dawning of the Messianic age. Some, with a slight change of text, would read, 'when thou awakest;' that is, when God's judgement has been executed, when the wicked have been destroyed and the pious delivered, the Psalmist, or the community of believers in whose name he speaks, will be undisturbed in their pure enjoyment of the divine communion.

On the verse, 'Let my sentence [or 'judgement'] come forth from thy presence,' the Midrash asks: 'How can it be proved that God takes bribes? Because it says, "He takes a bribe out of the bosom of the wicked" (Prov. xvii. 23. The real translation is, "The wicked takes a bribe out of his bosom"). And what is the bribe which he takes from the wicked in this world? Repentance and prayer and charity. God says, "My children, so long as the doors of prayer are open, repent; for in this world I take a bribe, but when hereafter I sit in judgement, I take no bribe, as it is said, He will not regard any ransom, neither will he consent, though thou multiply thy bribes."'

Noteworthy in this Psalm is the strong expression of the speaker's own righteousness. But it is very unlikely that the Psalmist believed himself personally free from all wrongdoing. Such conceit would show that he was far even from that degree of virtue which it is possible for man to acquire. For humility and the consciousness of imperfection—the vivid recognition of the more one might do and the better that one might be—are the foundation of human excellence. But the Psalmist is convinced of one thing: his faith and joy in God. It is this which he urges in contrast to the impiety (as he believes) of his adversaries. And as he speaks of his party rather than of his own individual self, the character of his assertion is changed. His party, as a matter of fact, comprised those who did honestly try to order their lives in accordance with the mandates of the Law, who did 'set the Lord before them.' I admit that self-righteousness was a spiritual and moral fault into which the pious Jews of the post-exilic period were sometimes liable to fall. For it was possible with a certain moderate effort to obey the ritual and ceremonial law; it was even possible to obey all the negative commands of the moral law, and some of its positive commands as well. And then, especially at a time when there were others who did not obey the ritual and ceremonial ordinances, it was easy and tempting to think yourself a pattern of moral and religious excellence, and so thinking to be in truth anything but that which you thought

yourself to be. But I cannot believe that the Psalmist, whose words show such keen faith in God and such joy in communing with him, was guilty of arid self-righteousness or of spiritual conceit.

§ 7. *The twenty-second Psalm: 'Why hast thou forsaken me?'*—Another group of prayerful hymns from days of persecution and sorrow opens with one of the most famous Psalms in the Psalter (xxii). The speaker, though in one sense the representative of the pious in Israel, and writing in their name, is in another sense an ideal figure, and almost a dramatic creation. In some respects he is the Psalmic counterpart of the Servant in the prophecies of the Second Isaiah, of whose book the author of this Psalm was a devout student and admirer. The date is once more some season of gloom and danger during the Persian rule. As with other Psalms, so here, the change from agonized petition to jubilant assurance is sudden and significant. The faithful believers obtain through prayer the conviction of their sure deliverance. Then they will fulfil the Servant's mission, and sing God's praises to the whole people of Israel, and to the world at large. We may note that 'no word of impatience escapes from the lips of the Psalmist, above all none of revenge against the enemies who have filled the cup of his miseries to overflowing.'

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?
  Thou art far from my cry, and from the words of my roaring.
O my God, I cry in the daytime, but thou hearest not;
  And in the night season, and have no rest.
But thou art the Holy One,
  Enthroned upon the praises of Israel.

Our fathers trusted in thee:
  They trusted, and thou didst deliver them.
They cried unto thee, and were delivered:
  They trusted in thee, and were not confounded.
But I am a worm, and no man;
  A reproach of men, and despised of the people.
All they that see me laugh me to scorn:
  They shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying,
'His redeemer is the Lord; He will rescue him!
  Let Him deliver him, seeing He delighteth in him!'
But thou art my God from of old,
  Thou hast been my trust from the beginning.

Be not far from me; for trouble is near;
For there is none to help.

Many bulls have compassed me:
Strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round.
For dogs have compassed me:
The assembly of the wicked have enclosed me.
They gape upon me with their mouths,
As a ravening and a roaring lion.

I am poured out like water,
And all my bones are out of joint:
My heart is like wax;
It is melted within me.
My palate is dried up like a potsherd;
And my tongue cleaveth to my jaws;
And thou hast brought me into the dust of death.
For dogs encompass me;
A company of villains encircle me.
I may number all my bones:
They look and stare upon me.
They part my garments among them,
And cast lots upon my vesture.

But be not thou far from me, O Lord:
O my strength, haste thee to help me.
Deliver my soul from the sword;
My dear life from the power of the dog.
Save me from the lion's mouth:
Deliver me from the horns of the wild ox.

I will declare thy name unto my brethren:
In the midst of the congregation will I praise thee.
Ye that fear the Lord, praise him;
All ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him;
And fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.
For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted;
Neither hath he hid his face from him;
But when he cried unto him, he heard.

Thy faithfulness shall be my praise in the great congregation:
I will pay my vows before them that fear him.

The meek shall eat and be satisfied:
They shall praise the Lord that seek him:
Let your heart revive for ever.

All the ends of the world shall remember and turn unto the Lord:
And all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before him.
For the kingdom is the Lord's:
And he is the governor among the nations.

All they that be fat upon earth shall surely worship him:
They shall bow down before him to the dust.
The seed of his servants shall recount the work of the Lord for the generation to come;
They shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born.

The bulls and dogs are metaphors of enemies, both external and internal. The pious are near to death. Yet the community will not die. Their seed at any rate will recount the work of the Lord to a people and a generation yet unborn. Note the striking metaphor in the first stanza. 'But thou art the Holy One; enthroned upon the praises of Israel.' Israel's praise of God forms a spiritual throne of glory.

'The affliction of the afflicted.' It can also be rendered, 'The poverty of the poor,' the ideas of affliction, humiliation and poverty being in Hebrew closely allied. The Midrash so translates it, and has many pretty illustrative stories. As for example: 'A woman brought a handful of flour to the Temple as a meal offering, but the priest treated it contemptuously, and said, "What a sacrifice is that!" But in a dream a voice said unto him, "Treat it not contemptuously; I regard it as if she had sacrificed herself."'

§ 8. *The twenty-fifth Psalm.*—The following Psalm (xxv) is one of the tenderest and most beautiful in the Psalter. Like a few others, it is 'alphabetic,' each verse beginning with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The alphabetical arrangement aided the memory, and also gave formal unity to a string of disconnected thoughts and aspirations. The last verse of the Psalm is a liturgical addition. The writer is thinking of, and speaking for, his community and his people. Their sorrows and their joys are his. Note the beautiful phrase: 'The communion of the Lord is with them that fear him.' Some translate 'secret,' others 'friendship.' On the basis of reverence there may come that

higher intimacy, that inward and secret communing with the Eternal Spirit, which is the crown and flower of the religious life. Professor Wellhausen says: 'This alphabetical song is an epitome of the world of religious thought and of that religious vocabulary which we find in the Psalms. The poet everywhere keeps the entire community in view, but in such a manner as to leave each individual at liberty to appropriate for his own benefit the truths which belong to the whole.'

Unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.
O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed,
  Let not mine enemies triumph over me.
Yea, let none that wait on thee be ashamed:
  Let them be ashamed who rebel without cause.
Make me to know thy ways, O Lord;
  Teach me thy paths.
Let me walk in thy truth, and teach me:
  For thou art the God of my salvation;
  On thee do I wait all the day.
Remember, O Lord, thy tender mercies and thy loving-kindnesses;
  For they have been ever of old.
Remember not the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions:
  According to thy mercy remember thou me
  For thy goodness' sake, O Lord.

Good and upright is the Lord:
  Therefore doth he teach sinners in the way.
The meek doth he guide in righteousness:
  And the meek doth he teach his way.
All the paths of the Lord are mercy and faithfulness
  Unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies.
For thy name's sake, O Lord, pardon mine iniquity;
  For it is great.
What man is he that feareth the Lord?
  Him shall he teach in the way that he should choose.
His soul shall dwell at ease;
  And his seed shall inherit the earth.
The communion of the Lord is with them that fear him;
  And he will shew them his covenant.
Mine eyes are ever toward the Lord;
  For he shall pluck my feet out of the net.
Turn thee unto me, and have mercy upon me;

For I am lonely and afflicted.
Relieve the troubles of my heart:
O bring thou me out of my distresses.
Look upon mine affliction and my pain;
And forgive all my sins.
Consider mine enemies; for they are many;
And they hate me with cruel hatred.
O keep my soul, and deliver me:
Let me not be ashamed; for I put my trust in thee.
Let integrity and uprightness preserve me;
For I wait on thee.

Redeem Israel, O God, out of all his troubles.

§ 9. *Psalms twenty-six and twenty-seven* (*b*).—The question of self-righteousness is again raised in the next Psalm (xxvi). The same remarks apply here as before. The speaker identifies himself with his community, and, writing out of their heart as much as out of his own, ascribes to himself the virtues which he fully believes to exist in them. For the pride of party existed undoubtedly—even as it has ever existed, and still exists to-day. In this Psalm we get clear allusions to that deep affection for the Temple services, and to that effective spiritualization of them, which will meet us again in many a subsequent hymn. The idea contained in the 'judge me' of the opening verse is, 'secure my right,' 'vindicate my cause,' 'bring about my triumph.'

Judge me, O Lord; for I have walked in mine integrity:
I have trusted in the Lord, and have not wavered.
Examine me, O Lord, and prove me;
Try my reins and my heart.
For thy lovingkindness is before mine eyes:
And I have walked in thy truth.
I have not sat with vain persons,
Neither do I come together with dissemblers.
I hate the congregation of evil doers;
And do not sit with the wicked.
I wash mine hands in innocency;
So that I may compass thine altar, O Lord,
That I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving,
And tell of all thy wondrous works.

Lord, I love the habitation of thy house,
And the place where thy glory dwelleth.

Take not away my soul with sinners,
  Nor my life with bloody men:
In whose hands is mischief,
  And their right hand is full of bribes.
But as for me, I walk in mine integrity:
  Redeem me, and be merciful unto me.
My foot standeth on even ground;
  In full assemblies will I bless the Lord.

On this Psalm I subjoin the second half of the Psalm (xxvii) which immediately succeeds it. For it would seem that the first portion is really a separate Psalm which will more fitly find its place elsewhere.

Hear, O Lord, when I cry with my voice;
  Have mercy upon me, and answer me.
(Thou hast said unto me,)
  'Seek ye my face':
  Thy face, O Lord, I will seek.
Hide not thy face from me,
  Put not thy servant away in anger.
Thou hast been my help; leave me not,
  Neither forsake me, O God of my salvation.
For my father and my mother have forsaken me,
  But the Lord will take me up.

Teach me thy way, O Lord,
  And lead me on an even path, because of mine enemies.
Deliver me not over unto the passion of mine enemies;
  For false witnesses are risen up against me,
  And such as breathe out violence.
If I did not believe to see the goodness of the Lord
In the land of the living ——!

Wait on the Lord:
  Be of good courage, and let thine heart be strong;
  Wait, I say, on the Lord.

The words, 'If I did not believe,' are what grammarians call an *aposiopesis*: the construction is incomplete. If he did not believe in deliverance, he would indeed despair. It is possible, however, that the text is corrupt, or that we should translate, 'I am confident of seeing.' 'The land of the living' is earth, for the life on earth, according to the belief of the Psalmists, to whom, or at

any rate to almost all of whom, the life with God closed perforce at death, is the only period during which the divine goodness could be 'seen' or realized. We have to read into these expressions of the Psalmists a somewhat different sense. 'Unless I believed there was in the last resort and in the divine mind a meaning in suffering and in evil, I should indeed despair of goodness and of God.' To the Psalmist outward deliverance was the only proof and test of God's justice. But we seek to maintain our faith in God, even though many a righteous man go to his earthly end amid pain, oppression and calamity.

§ 10. *The thirty-first Psalm: 'In te, Domine, speravi.'*—In the next Psalm (xxxi) the 'I' must be interpreted as in Psalm xxii (p. 442). It is the community of the pious who speak, of whom the writer feels himself one. Some refer the Psalm to the period of Nehemiah.

In thee, O Lord, I have taken refuge, let me never be ashamed;
Deliver me in thy righteousness.
Incline thine ear to me; deliver me speedily;
Be thou to me a rock of strength, a house of defence to save me.
For thou art my rock and my fortress;
For thy name's sake thou wilt lead and guide me.
Draw me out of the net that they have laid privily for me:
For thou art my stronghold.
Into thine hand I commit my spirit,
Thou redeemest me, O Lord, thou God of truth.
Thou hatest those that regard lying vanities,
But I—in the Lord do I trust.
I will be glad and rejoice in thy lovingkindness,
For thou hast beheld mine affliction,
Thou knewest the distresses of my soul.
Thou didst not shut me into the hand of the enemy,
Thou didst set my feet in a broad place.

Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am in trouble;
Mine eye is consumed with grief,
My soul and my body are confounded.
For my life is spent with anguish,
And my years with sighing;
My strength faileth because of my affliction,
And my bones are consumed because of my foes.

I am a sore reproach to my neighbours,
And a fear to mine acquaintance;
They that see me without flee away from me.
I am forgotten as a dead man out of mind;
I am like a broken vessel.
For I hear the whispering of many:
Terror is on every side: they take counsel together against me,
They devise to take away my life.

But I trust in thee, O Lord:
I say, Thou art my God.
My times are in thy hand:
Deliver me from the hand of mine enemies, and from them that persecute me.
Make thy face to shine upon thy servant:
Save me for thy lovingkindness' sake.
Let me not be ashamed, O Lord, for I have called upon thee:
Let the wicked be ashamed, and let them be silent in Sheol.
Let the lying lips be put to silence,
Which speak arrogant things proudly and contemptuously against the righteous.

Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them that fear thee;
Which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee before the sons of men!
Thou hidest them in the hiding-place of thy face from slanderers among men:
Thou concealest them in a bower from the accusing of tongues.

Blessed be the Lord:
For he hath shewed me his marvellous kindness in a time of distress.
I said in mine alarm, I am cut off from before thine eyes:
Nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my supplications when I cried unto thee.
O love the Lord, all ye his loving ones:
For the Lord keepeth faithfulness;
And amply requiteth the proud doer.
Be of good courage, and let your heart be strong,
All ye that hope in the Lord.

§ 11. *The thirty-eighth Psalm: 'Domine, ne in furore.'*—One of the greatest of the penitential Psalms follows (xxxviii). The speaker is once more a representative of his party. The whole body of pious believers is concentrated in the single 'I.' And in this Psalm they acknowledge and confess their sins. Some interpreters indeed suppose that the sins for which they accept responsibility are not really theirs: they are the sins of the people at large, for whose sake they suffer. The sufferer of this Psalm must in that case be compared with the Servant of the Second Isaiah. The solidarity of feeling in ancient Israel was so intense and vivid that it was quite possible for any single Israelite to confess and bewail the sins of his people as if they were his own. On the other hand, we know that in the Persian period the divisions in the community had become acute, and it is doubtful whether the sins of the one party would have been acknowledged by the other. It might be urged that the *result* of those sins—the continued delaying of the Messianic age—affected the pious believers more sorely than the careless or the apostate. But it is much the best and the most natural interpretation to suppose that the pious community acknowledges and deplores its own misdoings, its own lapses from the Law to which it owed allegiance. (The descriptions of sickness are metaphors of suffering.)

O Lord, rebuke me not in thy wrath,
  Neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.
For thine arrows stick fast in me,
  And thy hand presseth me sore.
There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger;
  Neither is there any health in my bones because of my sin.
For mine iniquities are gone over mine head:
  As an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.
My wounds stink and are corrupt
  Because of my foolishness.
I am afflicted; I am bowed down greatly;
  I go mourning all the day long.
For my loins are filled with burning,
  And there is no soundness in my flesh.
I am benumbed and sore broken:
  I moan more than the roaring of a lion.

Lord, all my desire is before thee;
  And my groaning is not hid from thee.
My heart throbbeth, my strength faileth me:
  As for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me.

My lovers and my friends stand aloof from my plague;
And my kinsmen stand afar off.
They also that seek after my life lay snares for me;
And they that seek my hurt speak mischievous things,
And imagine deceits all the day long.
But I, as a deaf man, hear not;
I am become as a dumb man that openeth not his mouth.
For in thee, O Lord, do I hope:
Thou wilt hear, O Lord my God.
For I said, Hear me, lest otherwise they should rejoice over me:
When my foot slippeth, they magnify themselves against me.
For I am near to fall,
And my pain is continually before me.
For I declare mine iniquity;
I am sorry for my sin.
But mine enemies without cause are strong:
And they that hate me wrongfully are multiplied.
They also that render evil for good are mine adversaries,
Because I follow after the good.
Forsake me not, O Lord:
O my God, be not far from me.
Make haste to help me,
O Lord, my salvation.

§ 12. *The thirty-ninth Psalm.*—The next Psalm (xxxix) has been called 'the most beautiful of all the elegies in the Psalter.' The pious believer, in spite of calamity, must not complain of God's dispensations and decrees; all the more must he be patient and silent in the presence of the 'ungodly,' lest he increase their mockery and give them occasion to blaspheme. Such is the original meaning, but this Psalm is one of those which each reader will interpret for himself. For purposes of edification and prayer, why should we not read into the Psalms whatever we will? There is genius in these lyrics, and it is a characteristic of the writings of genius that there is more in them than their author knew, and that they have various applications and implications for different ages and readers.

I said, 'I will take heed to my ways,
That I sin not with my tongue:
I will put a bridle on my mouth,
While the wicked is before me.'

I was dumb with silence,
I held my peace altogether; (?)
But my sorrow was stirred.
My heart was hot within me,
As I mused the fire burned;
Then spake I with my tongue:

'Lord, make me to know mine end,
And the measure of my days, what it is;
That I may know how frail I am.
Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth;
And mine age is as nothing before thee;
Verily every man is but a breath.
Surely as a mere semblance every man walketh to and fro;
His tumult is but a breath;
He heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.'

And now, Lord, what wait I for?
My hope is in thee.
Deliver me from all my transgressions:
Make me not the reproach of the foolish.
I am dumb, I open not my mouth;
Because thou hast done it.
Remove thy stroke away from me:
I am consumed by the blow of thine hand.
When thou with rebukes dost correct man for iniquity,
Thou makest his beauty to consume away like a moth:
Surely every man is but a breath.

Hear my prayer, O Lord,
And give ear unto my cry;
Hold not thy peace at my tears:
For I am a stranger with thee,
And a sojourner, as all my fathers were.
Look away from me, that I may be glad again,
Before I go hence, and be no more.

'Look away from me,' in the last paragraph, recalls a phrase in Job. It is a metaphor, and means: 'Cease to be angry.' Even as the law bids the Israelites be kind and charitable to all strangers

and foreign settlers, so does the Psalmist claim a like protection from God. For the earth is his, and man comes and goes upon it, as a guest who tarries for a season. Commenting on the last verse of this Psalm, Professor Wellhausen observes: 'The Psalmist's resignation borders upon despair. It is remarkable how little he desires from God. The present is cheerless; of a future world there is no thought. Faith longs for sight, but longs in vain; yet it persists, though it is almost extinguished by the painful contradiction which experience brings. A prayer like this cannot be found except in the Old Testament.' But Professor Delitzsch has said more truly of this same Psalm: 'This is just the heroic feature in the faith of the Old Testament, that, in the midst of the riddles of this life, and face to face with the impenetrable darkness resting on the life beyond, it throws itself without reserve into the arms of God.'

'Socrates, called *Scholasticus*, an ecclesiastical historian of the fifth century, tells of a plain man named Pambo, who came to a learned man and asked him to teach him some Psalm. He began to read to him the thirty-ninth: "I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue." Having heard this first sentence, Pambo took his leave, saying he would make this his first lesson. He did not return, and when his teacher met him after the space of two months, and asked him when he would proceed, he replied that he had not yet mastered his first lesson; and he gave the like answer to one who asked the same question forty-nine years after' (Ker, *The Psalms in History and Biography*). But Pambo became a great saint all the same. The story is humorously told by Mr. Browning with a comic application to himself in *Jocoseria*—the last poem in that volume.

§ 13. *The forty-first Psalm.*—The subject of the next Psalm (xli) is somewhat obscure. Some scholars regard it as a Psalm of Thanksgiving for deliverance from trouble; others as a didactic Psalm; others as a prayer for help. I have chosen the last interpretation. Perhaps when the Psalm was adopted for liturgical purposes its original opening was modified. The disease is a metaphor for communal calamity, but originally the Psalm must have been the result and record of an individual's sorrow. The writer is conscious of personal sin, but he belongs to the party of integrity. It is to that party, the true Israel, to whose continual existence the honour of God is pledged. They will abide before God's face for ever. In the opening line 'considereth' is Coverdale's very happy and accurate rendering of the Hebrew word '*maskil*.' 'Consideration' implies both thought and benevolence.

Happy is he that considereth the poor:
The Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.
The Lord will preserve him, and keep him alive;
And he shall be counted happy upon the earth:
And thou wilt not deliver him unto the rage of his enemies.
The Lord will support him upon the bed of languishing:
Thou changest all his couch in his sickness.

I say, 'Lord, be merciful unto me:
Heal my soul; for I have sinned against thee.'
Mine enemies speak evil of me,
'When shall he die, and his name perish?'
And if one come to see me, he speaketh falsehood:
His heart gathereth malice to itself;
When he goeth abroad, he telleth it.
All that hate me whisper together against me:
Against me do they devise evil.
'A sore disease,' say they, 'cleaveth fast unto him:
And now that he lieth he shall rise up no more.'
Yea, mine own familiar friend, in whom I trusted, who did eat of my bread,
Hath lifted up his heel against me. (?)

But thou, O Lord, be gracious unto me,
Raise me up, and requite them.
By this I shall know that thou hast pleasure in me,
That mine enemies will not triumph over me.
For I—thou upholdest me in mine integrity,
Thou settest me before thy face for ever.

§ 14. *Psalms forty-two and forty-three: The soul which longs for God.*—With the next Psalm we pass out of the first collection into the second. For some unknown reason it has become divided in our present Psalter into two (xlii, xliii). It was written, perhaps by some Levite (for it is a Psalm of Korah), at any rate by some lover of the Temple and its services, far from Jerusalem, in an enforced captivity. Some scholars assign it to the reign of Artaxerxes Ochus; Professor Cheyne would look rather to the days of Scopas and Antiochus the Great (198 B.C.). The Psalm is divided into three equal parts by a thrice-repeated refrain. The 'little mountain' is apparently the hill of Zion, but the text is probably corrupt. How admirably the love of the Temple became combined with the purest religious rapture! And note that the

lack of the material temple could not separate the singer from his God. Spirit was near to spirit.

As a hart panteth after the water brooks,
So panteth my soul after thee, O God.
My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God:
When shall I come and behold God's face?
My tears have been my bread day and night,
While they continually say unto me, 'Where is thy God?'
I remember these things, and pour out my soul within me:
How I went with the throng, and led them to the house of God,
With the voice of joy and praise, a multitude keeping holiday.
Why art thou cast down, O my soul?
And why art thou disquieted within me?
Wait thou for God: for I shall yet praise him,
Who is the salvation of my countenance, and my God.

O my God, my soul is cast down within me:
Therefore will I remember thee far from the land of Jordan,
Far from Hermon and the little hill.
Deep calleth unto deep at the voice of thy waterspouts;
All thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.
I say unto God my rock, 'Why hast thou forgotten me?
Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?'
As with rottenness in my bones, mine enemies reproach me;
While they say daily unto me, 'Where is thy God?'
Why art thou cast down, O my soul?
And why art thou disquieted within me?
Wait thou for God: for I shall yet praise him,
Who is the salvation of my countenance, and my God.

Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against a merciless nation:
O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man.
For thou art the God of my strength: why dost thou cast me off?
Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?
O send out thy light and thy truth: let them lead me;

Let them bring me unto thy holy hill, and to thy dwelling-
place.
Then will I go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceed-
ing joy:
Yea, upon the harp will I praise thee, O God my God.
Why art thou cast down, O my soul?
And why art thou disquieted within me?
Wait thou for God: for I shall yet praise him,
Who is the salvation of my countenance, and my God.

§ 15. *The fifty-fifth Psalm:* '*Exaudi, Deus.*'—The occasion and nearer epoch of the next Psalm (lv) are unknown. Doubtless the speaker is, as usual, the representative of his party, but the 'friend' can hardly be other than an individual, and the incident referred to a real one. The rendering of the last verse is partly conjectural.

Give ear to my prayer, O God,
And hide not thyself from my supplication.
Attend unto me, and hear me:
I toss to and fro in my complaint, and moan aloud, (?)
Because of the voice of the enemy, because of the oppression
of the wicked:
For they cast mischief upon me, and in wrath they
persecute me.
My heart is sore pained within me:
And the terrors of death are fallen upon me.
Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me,
And horror hath overwhelmed me.
And I said, 'Oh that I had wings like a dove!
For then would I fly away, and be at rest.
Lo, then would I fly far off,
I would lodge in the wilderness.
I would hasten my escape
From the windy storm and tempest.'

Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues:
For I have seen violence and strife in the city.
Day and night they go about it upon the walls thereof:
Mischief also and trouble are in the midst of it.
Wickedness is in the midst thereof:
Oppression and guile depart not from its market-place.

For it is not an enemy that revileth me; then I could bear it:
  Neither is it he that hateth me that is insolent towards me;
  Then I would hide myself from him:
But it is thou, a man mine equal,
  My familiar friend, and mine acquaintance.
We took sweet counsel together,
  And walked unto the house of God amid the throng.

But as for me, I will call upon God,
  And the Lord will save me.
Evening and morning and noon I will complain and moan;
  So shall he hear my voice.
He hath delivered my soul in peace that they should not
    come nigh me,
  For there were many who had risen up against me.
God heareth the cry of the afflicted;
  Yea, he that is enthroned of old answereth them.

§ 16. *Psalms fifty-six and fifty-seven.*—The next two Psalms (lvi, lvii) are, as Professor Cheyne says, 'twins.' For lofty trust in God amid trouble and danger, simply and yet grandly expressed, they take a high rank among their fellows. Unfortunately, the text is in many places very uncertain and corrupt. I have adopted various emendations which afford a more probable sense than the existing text.

Be merciful unto me, O God, for man crusheth me;
  All the day he fighteth and oppresseth me.
Mine enemies would crush me all the day,
  For they be many that fight against me.
On the day when I fear, I trust in thee.
  I boast of God continually,
  In God I put my trust:
I have no fear; what can flesh do unto me?

All the day they plot against me, (?)
  All their thoughts are against me for evil.
They gather themselves together, they hide themselves,
  They mark my steps; like a lion they wait for my soul.
Recompense them according to their wickedness;
  In thine anger cast down the peoples, O God.
Thou tellest my wanderings: (?)
  Thou puttest my tears into thy bottle.

When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back:
I know that God is for me.
Of God I boast continually:
In God I put my trust:
I have no fear; what can man do unto me?

Thy vows are upon me, O God:
I will render thank-offerings unto thee.
For thou hast delivered my soul from death:
Thou hast saved my feet from falling,
That I may walk before God in the light of the living.

'I will render thank-offerings.' The Midrash says finely, 'If all prayers become needless in the future, the prayer of thanksgiving will never be abandoned; and though all sacrifices shall cease in the future, the thank-offering will cease not for ever.'

Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me;
For my soul trusteth in thee;
Yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge,
Until these calamities be overpast.
I will cry unto God most high;
Unto God that dealeth bountifully with me.
He shall send from heaven, and save me
From the grasp of mine enemies:
God shall send forth his lovingkindness and his truth.

My soul is among lions:
Even the sons of men, whose teeth are spears and arrows,
And their tongue a sharp sword.
They have prepared a net for my steps;
They have bowed down my soul.
They have digged a pit before me:
They are fallen into the midst of it.
Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens;
Let thy glory be above all the earth.

My heart is steadfast, O God, my heart is steadfast:
I will sing and give praise.
Awake, my glory; awake, harp and lyre;
I will awake the dawn.
I will praise thee, O Lord, among the peoples:
I will sing unto thee among the nations.

For thy lovingkindness is great unto the heavens,
And thy truth unto the clouds.
Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens;
Let thy glory be above all the earth.

§ 17. *The sixty-second Psalm.*—Another Psalm of Trust (lxii). 'Wait for the Lord.' Fret not; be resigned. And not merely resigned passively. Let your being and your life be in harmony with what you feel to be the supremest Will, the purest Good. Live and act with God, not against him. May we thus, mystically and yet not fancifully, enlarge and paraphrase our Psalm?

Wait silently, my soul, upon God:
From him cometh my salvation.
He only is my rock and my salvation;
He is my defence; I shall not be moved.
How long will ye rage against a man,
Would ye break him down, all of you,
As a bowing wall and a tottering fence?
They only consult to drag him down from his height: (?)
They delight in lies:
They bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly.

Wait silently, my soul, upon God;
For my expectation is from him.
He only is my rock and my salvation:
He is my defence; I shall not be moved.
Upon God rest my salvation and my glory:
The rock of my strength, and my refuge, is in God.
Trust in him, O assembly of the people,
Pour out your heart before him:
God is a refuge for us.

Surely men of low degree are a breath, and men of high degree are a lie:
Laid in the balance, they are altogether as a breath.
Trust not in perversity,
And become not vain through crookedness;
If riches spring up, give no heed to them.
God hath spoken once;
Twice have I heard this:
That power belongeth unto God,

And that unto thee, O Lord, belongeth lovingkindness,
For thou renderest to every man according to his work.

'Against a man.' Professor Wellhausen thinks that the danger here mentioned 'is a public one, threatening the theocracy. It shows itself in an onslaught on a prominent individual, who is virtually the leader of the commonwealth. He is attacked by a Jewish faction which, while affecting piety, exerts a pernicious influence.' This individual, according to Professor Wellhausen, is probably a Maccabean leader or king.

'Surely men of low degree are a breath.' Apparently the meaning is, trust in God, and not in men, who are here to-day and gone to-morrow, and whose promises are often illusory. Or it may mean, our adversaries are mere men; their vaunted power but brief and deceptive. Or it may mean, man is frail and fleeting; his strength is deceptive: vain and irrational is it therefore for such a being to adopt crooked and perverse methods of conduct so as to obtain ephemeral power or transitory wealth. To the ill-gotten gains of others let no righteous man give heed.

The interest of the Psalm may be said to lie in its general trend of thought, and in its vivid portrayal of a great and noble mind harassed by encountering the petty intrigues of jealousy, but cleaving to God for comfort and support, and thereby obtaining a true sense of proportion and a calm serenity of soul.

'According to his work.' 'What does this imply?' says the Midrash. 'Many a man purposes to commit a sin, but does not commit it. But God does not account to him the sin until he has actually committed it. But if he purposes to do a good action and is hindered and does it not, God accounts it to him as if he had done it.' The Midrash desires to emphasize the mercy of God. It ignores the case where a man purposes or desires to commit a sin, but does not commit it through mere fear of the consequences or because he is accidentally prevented. Of him it might almost be said that in God's eyes he has committed it. On the other hand the words of Shakespeare are true:—

> 'Tis one thing to be tempted, Escalus,
> Another thing to fall.'

It would be ridiculous to say that the man who was greatly tempted to commit a bad action, but overcomes the temptation, is not morally superior to the man who is not only tempted, but yields.

§ 18. *The sixty-ninth Psalm.*—The speaker in the next Psalm (lxix) is the same as in Psalms xxii and xxxviii (§§ 7 and 11). The

period is perhaps the same also, or it may be the Maccabean. The pious believers suffer through their fidelity: they incur enmity and are estranged from their fellow-citizens by their zeal for the Lord.

Save me, O God;
For the waters are come in unto my soul.
I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing;
I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.
I am weary of my crying; my throat is burnt up;
Mine eyes fail while I wait for my God.
They that hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of mine head;
They that are falsely mine enemies are more in number than my bones.
O God, thou knowest my foolishness;
And my sins are not hid from thee.
Let not them that wait for thee, O Lord God of hosts, be ashamed through me;
Let not those that seek thee be confounded through me, O Lord God of Israel.

Because for thy sake I have borne reproach;
Shame hath covered my face.
I am become a stranger unto my brethren,
And an alien unto my mother's children.
For the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up;
And the reproaches of them that reproached thee are fallen upon me.
I afflicted my soul with fasting,
Which was to my reproach.
I made sackcloth also my garment;
And I became a proverb to them.
They that sit in the gate talk of me;
And I am the song of the drunkards.
But as for me, my prayer is unto thee, O Lord,
Shew me favour, O God, in the multitude of thy mercy;
Hear me in the truth of thy salvation.
Deliver me out of the mire, and let me not sink;
Let me be delivered from them that hate me, and out of the deep waters.
Let not the waterflood overflow me,
Neither let the deep swallow me up,

And let not the pit shut her mouth upon me.
Hear me, O Lord; for thy lovingkindness is good:
Turn unto me according to the multitude of thy tender mercies.
And hide not thy face from thy servant;
For I am in trouble: hear me speedily.
Draw nigh unto my soul, and redeem it;
Deliver me because of mine enemies.
Thou knowest my reproach and my shame and my dishonour:
Mine adversaries are all before thee.
Reproach hath broken my heart; and very grievous is the wound of my soul:
I looked for one to take pity, but there was none;
And for comforters, but I found none.
They gave me gall for my food;
And in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink.

I am poor and sorrowful:
But thy salvation, O God, will set me up on high.
I will praise the name of God with a song,
And will magnify him with thanksgiving.
And this shall please the Lord better than an ox
Or bullock with horns and hoofs.
The humble shall see this, and be glad:
Ye that seek God, let your heart revive.
For the Lord hearkeneth to the needy;
And despiseth not his prisoners.
Let the heaven and earth praise him,
The seas, and every thing that moveth therein.
For God will save Zion,
And will build the cities of Judah:
And men shall dwell there, and have it in possession.
The seed also of his servants shall inherit it,
And they that love his name shall dwell therein.

'Confounded through me.' So can speak each individual pious Israelite. May his guilt not cause the Lord to withhold his help from the suffering brotherhood of which he is a member. The author writes for himself and for each unit of the community, For as a whole the 'party'—the true Israel—is 'righteous'; it is certainly righteous as contrasted with its foes, whether within

or without the national pale. But each member of it is aware in his own conscience of individual lapses, which have been confessed and laid bare unto God.

§ 19. *Psalm seventy-one.* — The next Psalm (lxxi) is mainly a compilation or cento from other Psalms, to most of which we have already listened. The 'I' is the pious community of believers. The 'youth' refers to Israel's youth; the 'birth' to the Exodus from Egypt, when the nation was born religiously and even politically. For the date we may again look to the closing epoch of the Persian rule. Let me again emphasize the fact that the Psalmist feels what he writes. He records the experiences of his own soul, though he speaks from the heart of his community. There is no *personation* about the Psalms. They can be our individual solace now, even as the thoughts which are expressed in them were the solace and hope of the individual writers. Not only was God the hope of the community, but also of the individual.

In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust;
Let me never be ashamed.
Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape;
Incline thine ear unto me, and save me.
Be thou my rock of refuge,
A fortified house that thou mayest save me;
For thou art my rock and my fortress.

Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked,
Out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man.
For thou art my hope, O Lord God:
Thou art my trust from my youth,
On thee have I stayed myself from my birth;
My hope is ever in thee.

I am as a portent unto many;
But thou art my strong refuge.
Let my mouth be filled with thy praise
And with thy glory all the day.
Cast me not off in the time of old age;
Forsake me not when my strength faileth.

For mine enemies speak against me;
And they that lay wait for my soul take counsel together,
Saying, 'God hath forsaken him:
Pursue and take him; for there is none to deliver him.'

O God, be not far from me;
O my God, make haste for my help.

Let them be confounded and put to shame that are adversaries to my soul;
Let them be covered with reproach and dishonour that seek my hurt.
But I will hope continually,
And will yet praise thee more and more.
My mouth shall shew forth thy righteousness and thy salvation all the day;
I will shew forth the mighty deeds of the Lord God;
I will make mention of thy righteousness, even of thine only.

O God, thou hast taught me from my youth,
And hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works.
Now also when I am old and greyheaded, O God, forsake me not;
Until I have told thine arm unto the generation to come,
Even thy power and thy righteousness.
Thy mighty deeds, O God, reach unto the heights,
O God, who is like unto thee!
Thou, who hast shewed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again,
And shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth.

So will I praise thee among the nations, O Lord,
Even thy faithfulness upon the harp, O my God:
Unto thee will I sing with the lyre, O thou Holy One of Israel.
My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee;
And my soul, which thou hast redeemed.
My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long:
For they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt.

'In thy righteousness.' The Midrash is always dwelling upon God's mercy. So here: 'Israel says unto God, If thou wouldest help us, help us not through our own righteousness and good works, but redeem us through thy righteousness.' Or again, commenting on the last words of Psalm xi (p. 438), it says: 'If

we have any good works to show, he gives us their recompense; but if not, he gives us righteousness and grace from his own goodness.' With their fervent belief in a future life, the Rabbinic teachers had far less difficulty than the Psalmists in reconciling the long agony of persecution and sore distress with the infinite tenderness of God.

§ 20. *The seventy-seventh Psalm: 'Voce mea ad Dominum.'*—The gist of the following Psalm (lxxvii) is apparently to point out to despondent believers in days of trouble and darkness how comfort may be won by considering God's mercies to Israel in the historic past. What has been may be again. As he saved then, so may he, nay, so will he, save again. If his arm seems stayed and its strength diminished, this is because of Israel's sin. But the tenses are difficult, and the text and meaning in one important and crucial verse are very uncertain. I have followed the rendering of Professor Driver, which coincides with Ewald's. The end is perhaps defective. Professor Cheyne thinks that the last stanza is part of another Psalm. It seems to deal in poetic elaboration with the departure from Egypt and the crossing of the Red Sea.

(I said,) 'I will cry unto God with my voice,
Even unto God with my voice, that he may give ear unto me.'
In the day of my trouble I sought the Lord;
My hand was stretched out in the night, and wearied not;
My soul refused to be comforted.
(I said,) 'I will remember God, and make my moan,
I will muse;' but my spirit was overwhelmed.
Thou heldest mine eyelids open:
I was so troubled that I could not speak.

I considered the days of old,
The years of ancient times.
(I said,) 'I will call to remembrance my song in the night:
I will commune with my heart;'
And my spirit made search, (saying):
'Will the Lord cast off for ever,
And will he be favourable no more?
Is his mercy clean gone for ever,
Doth his faithfulness fail for evermore?
Hath God forgotten to be gracious,
Hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies?'

Then I said, 'This is my infirmity:
But I will remember the years of the right hand of the most High. (?)
I will make mention of the works of the Lord;
I will remember thy wonders of old.
I will meditate also on all thy work,
And muse on thy doings.'

Thy way, O God, is in holiness:
Who is so great a God as the Lord?
Thou art the God that doest wonders;
Thou hast declared thy strength among the peoples.
Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people,
The sons of Jacob and Joseph.

The waters saw thee, O God,
The waters saw thee; they were afraid;
The depths also were troubled.
The clouds poured out water;
The skies sent out a sound;
Thine arrows also went abroad.
The voice of thy thunder was in the whirlwind;
The lightnings lightened the world;
The earth trembled and shook.
Thy way was in the sea,
And thy path in the great waters,
And thy footsteps were not known.
Thou leddest thy people like a flock
By the hand of Moses and Aaron.

§ 21. *The eighty-fifth Psalm.*—The following Psalm (lxxxv) may belong to the early period of the restoration from Babylon, when to the high-pitched expectations, to which the prophecies of the Second Isaiah had given rise, there succeeded disillusionment and adversity. The petty settlement in Judaea under the doubtful favour of the Persian kings was a feeble substitute for the independence and glory which had been expected and foretold. But the Psalmist clings to the same indomitable hope as the prophets. Let but the heart of his people be truly turned towards God, and the promised salvation shall soon be realized. The value of the Psalm to us lies in its fine description of what that salvation shall consist in. There is a mingling of material and spiritual blessings, but the spiritual predominate. Such salvation does not come all at once or on a sudden: but it comes gradually and little by little. Is

it not in giving fuller and more concrete meaning, a wider and more discerning application, to these 'vacant forms of light'—loving-kindness and truth, righteousness and peace—that the true progress of man consists?

Lord, thou hadst been favourable to thy land,
  Thou hadst turned the fortunes of Jacob.
Thou hadst forgiven the iniquity of thy people,
  Thou hadst covered all their sin.
Thou hadst taken away all thy wrath:
  Thou hadst turned thyself from the fierceness of thine anger.

Restore us, O God of our salvation,
  And cause thine anger toward us to cease.
Wilt thou be angry with us for ever?
  Wilt thou draw out thine anger to all generations?
Wilt thou not revive us again:
  That thy people may rejoice in thee?
Shew us thy lovingkindness, O Lord,
  And grant us thy salvation.

I will hear what God the Lord will speak:
  For he will speak peace unto his people, and to his loving ones,
  To them who turn their hearts unto him.
Surely his salvation is nigh them that fear him;
  That glory may dwell in our land.
Lovingkindness and truth are met together;
  Righteousness and peace have kissed each other.
Truth shall spring out of the earth;
  And righteousness shall look down from heaven.
The Lord shall also give that which is good;
  And our land shall yield her increase.
Righteousness shall go before him;
  And peace in the way of his steps.

§ 22. *The eighty-sixth Psalm:* '*Inclina, Domine.*'—The next Psalm (lxxxvi) is an exquisite 'cento of reminiscences' from older Psalms and other religious writings. Though the Psalm is therefore not original, the discrimination and tact of selection are most delightful. The speaker is a 'representative pious Israelite' who speaks in the name of his people. For Israel in its historic past was the 'handmaid' of God, while the

son of that handmaid is the generation of the Psalmist, himself included. Pious Israel knows that its heart is set Godwards, but it is far from claiming to itself moral or religious perfection. It still asks God for guidance and inspiration. Note that prayers for vengeance are pleasingly absent from this Psalm, while, on the other hand, the larger Messianic hope is emphasized. The salvation of Israel is the enlightenment of the nations.

Incline thine ear, O Lord, and answer me;
For I am afflicted and needy.
Preserve my soul; for I am loving:
O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee.
Be merciful unto me, O Lord:
For I cry unto thee daily.
Rejoice the soul of thy servant:
For unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.
For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive;
And plenteous in lovingkindness unto all them that call upon thee.

Give ear, O Lord, unto my prayer;
And attend to the voice of my supplications.
In the day of my trouble I call upon thee:
For thou wilt answer me.
Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord;
Neither are there any works like unto thy works.
All nations whom thou hast made
Shall come and worship before thee, O Lord;
And shall glorify thy name.
For thou art great, and doest wondrous things;
Thou art God alone.

Teach me thy way, O Lord; I will walk in thy truth:
So shall my heart rejoice to fear thy name.
I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart;
And I will glorify thy name for evermore.
For great is thy mercy toward me;
And thou hast delivered my soul from Sheol beneath.
O God, the proud are risen against me,
And the assemblies of violent men have sought after my soul;
And have not set thee before them.
But thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious,

Longsuffering, and plenteous in lovingkindness and truth.
O turn unto me, and have mercy upon me;
Give thy strength unto thy servant,
And save the son of thine handmaid.
Shew me a token for good;
That they who hate me may see it and be ashamed,
Because thou, O Lord, hast helped me and comforted me.

§ 23. *The eighty-eighth Psalm.*—Unless the true close of the following Psalm (lxxxviii) be lost, it is the saddest in the Psalter. Prayer brings comfort. Therefore the petitions of the Psalmists end in hope. But the eighty-eighth Psalm is an exception to the rule; it concludes as it had begun in lamentation and gloom.

O Lord my God, I have cried for help by day,
And by night my cry is before thee.
Let my prayer come before thee;
Incline thine ear unto my cry.

For my soul is full of troubles,
And my life draweth nigh unto Sheol.
I am counted with them that go down into the pit;
I am as a man that hath no strength.

I am likened unto the dead,
Like the slain that lie in the grave,
Whom thou rememberest no more:
And they are cut off from thy hand.

Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit,
In darkness, in the deeps.
Thou hast poured forth thy wrath upon me,
And thou hast let all thy waves pass over me.

Thou hast put away mine acquaintance far from me;
Thou hast made me an abomination unto them:
I am shut up, and I cannot come forth.
Mine eye wasteth away by reason of affliction:
Lord, I have called daily upon thee,
I have stretched out my hands unto thee.

Wilt thou shew wonders to the dead,
Shall the shades arise and praise thee?

Shall thy lovingkindness be declared in the grave,
  Or thy faithfulness in Abaddon?
Shall thy wonders be known in the dark,
  And thy righteousness in the land of forgetfulness?

But unto thee have I cried, O Lord;
  And in the morning doth my prayer come before thee.
Lord, why castest thou off my soul,
  Why hidest thou thy face from me?

I am afflicted and ready to die;
  I suffer thy terrors; I am benumbed.
Thy fierce wrath goeth over me;
  Thy terrors have destroyed me.
They surround me like water all the day;
  They compass me about together.
Thou hast put far from me lover and friend;
  Mine acquaintance hast thou withheld from me.

Abaddon (literally, destruction) is a poetical synonym for Sheol, the land of the shades. The Psalmist means to say: Is God going to secure the continuance of his praise and to preserve his fidelity to Israel by the miracle of a resurrection of the dead? If all Israel upon earth is to die and be cut off entirely, what resource will there be but to awaken the dead? But to the Psalmist this is a *reductio ad absurdum*. The hope of immortality in our sense of the word had not yet dawned. The dwellers in Sheol feel neither joy nor sorrow. The shades have forgotten God. From Sheol can come forth no praise. But now, as we read these mournful words, the hope is resurgent and strong within our souls: God's lovingkindness shall be declared beyond the grave. He *will* show wonders to the dead.

§ 24. *The ninetieth Psalm: 'Domine, refugium.'*—We now pass from the second to the third collection, out of which, however, there will be only six Psalms to include in our present group. Of these the first (xc) has for some not clearly ascertainable reasons received the heading, 'A Prayer of Moses, the man of God.' But it must have been written many centuries after Moses, when the community of Israel was fully formed, and when its religious consciousness had been trained and matured by many ages of prophetic teaching and historic experience. One of the many gloomy moments in the long Persian period may be its date. The prayer for deliverance, which is the culmination of the Psalm,

is prefaced by an impressive reflection upon the successive generations of man as they journey in rapid and ceaseless movement from the birth to the grave. The Psalmist is still somewhat oppressed by the phantom or nightmare of the divine wrath; he had not sufficiently realized the doctrine of God's unity so as to see that, God's justice and God's mercy being one and the same, 'wrath' and 'anger' are terms essentially inapplicable to the divine being. But the brevity of life and the lessons which that brevity teaches remain the same as of old. We too may pray like the Psalmist: 'So teach us to number our days, that we may get us an heart of wisdom.'

Lord, thou hast been our refuge
In all generations.
Before the mountains were brought forth,
Or the earth and the world were born,
Even from everlasting to everlasting, thou art God.
Thou turnest man back to dust:
And sayest, 'Return, ye children of men.'
For a thousand years in thy sight
Are but as yesterday as it passeth away,
And as a watch in the night.

Thou carriest them away as with a flood; they become as a sleep;
They are like grass which groweth up.
In the morning it flourisheth, and groweth up,
In the evening it is cut down, and withereth.
For we are consumed by thine anger,
And by thy wrath are we troubled.
Thou hast set our iniquities before thee,
Our secret sins in the light of thy countenance.

For all our days pass away in thy wrath;
We spend our years as a sigh.
The days of our years are threescore years,
Or if by reason of strength they be fourscore years,
Yet is their pride but labour and vanity,
For it is soon cut off, and we fly away.
Who knoweth the power of thine anger,
Or thy wrath as the fear of thee befitteth?
So teach us to number our days,
That we may get us an heart of wisdom.

Return, O Lord, how long?
And let it repent thee concerning thy servants.
O satisfy us early with thy mercy;
That we may rejoice and be glad all our days.
Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us,
And the years wherein we have seen evil.
Let thy work appear unto thy servants,
And thy glory unto their children.
And let the graciousness of the Lord our God be upon us:
And prosper thou the work of our hands;
Yea, prosper thou our handiwork.

The opening verses of this Psalm suggested the famous hymn, 'O God, our help in ages past,' which I will here quote in full.

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal home!

Beneath the shadow of thy throne
Thy saints have dwelt secure;
Sufficient is thine arm alone,
And our defence is sure.

Before the hills in order stood,
Or earth received her frame,
From everlasting thou art God,
To endless years the same.

A thousand ages in thy sight
Are like an evening gone;
Short as the watch that ends the night
Before the rising sun.

Time, like an ever-rolling stream,
Bears all its sons away;
They fly forgotten, as a dream
Dies at the opening day.

O God, our help in ages past,
Our hope for years to come;
Be thou our guard while troubles last,
And our eternal home.

I wish this beautiful hymn were sung in our synagogues.

It is well worth while to quote the probably accurate explanation of this Psalm by Professor Wellhausen: 'From the conclusion it is clear that the community is speaking. Because heavy misfortune has been long weighing it down, and God does not manifest his countenance or his hand, the people feel that his wrath rests upon them. But the fortunes of men in general are blended with the lot that history has assigned to the community. And the wrath of God which his people feel is not a mere transient and extraordinary misfortune affecting Israel alone; it is the abiding and inevitable misery of human life. This conveys the impression that God's relation to Israel is neither more nor less close than his relation to men in general. The specific Israelitish way of looking at things is lost in the universal, but comes up again at the close. These inconsistencies make it difficult to point out a logical connexion of ideas. In several places we can do no more than indicate the psychological association of ideas, the pathology of the writer's mind. But this does not diminish the deep impression which the Psalm makes.'

I will also quote the comments of the 'Four Friends,' whose edition of the Psalter contains many helpful thoughts. 'This has been called the funeral hymn of the world. The troubles of the times in which the Psalmist's life had been cast made him realize to the full the great truth of the frailty of man and the transitoriness of all that is human. This truth has a far different significance to the spiritual and to the worldly man. To the worldly man it brings either despair or recklessness; a folding of the hands in fatalistic indifference, or the spirit of "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." To the spiritual man it is the counterpart of the higher truth of the eternity of God; the lesson it teaches him is not despair but resignation; not fatalism or frivolity but faith and earnestness. The criterion of man's greatness is not his power of resistance to God, but his power to co-operate with God's work and to bring his own will into harmony with the will of God. The highest prayer which man can offer to God is 'Thy will be done,' and it is only when the union between the human and the divine will is complete that the work of man can gain a blessing for itself and exert a lasting influence on the world.'

§ 25. *The ninety-fourth Psalm.*—In the following Psalm (xciv) it is very difficult to say whether the Psalmist seeks to be delivered from external or internal foes, or whether both classes of enemies are alluded to. In the last supposition the transitions would be very abrupt; yet there are some passages which must certainly refer to internal or native oppressors, while there

are others which seem to imply foreigners. Like many other Psalms in this group, this one too seems dependent upon the Book of Job. The verse, 'He that planteth the ear, shall he not hear?' &c., marks a step in religious thought, and in another form still appeals to us. The universal spirit must, we argue, be not less rational and not less good than the finite spirits of man. We can only account for human love if its ultimate source be divine.

O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth;
O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shine forth!
Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth:
Render a recompense to the proud.

Lord, how long shall the wicked,
How long shall the wicked triumph?
They pour forth and utter arrogant things,
And all the workers of iniquity are proud.
They crush thy people, O Lord,
They afflict thine heritage.
They slay the widow and the stranger,
And murder the fatherless.
Yet they say, 'The Lord will not see,
Neither will the God of Jacob regard it.'

Give heed, ye brutish among the people:
And ye fools, when will ye be wise?
He that planted the ear, shall he not hear?
He that formed the eye, shall he not see?
He that formeth the nations, shall not he punish?
Shall he not teach man knowledge? (?)
The Lord knoweth the thoughts of man,
For they are but a breath.

Happy is the man whom thou admonishest, O Lord,
And teachest him out of thy law;
That thou mayest give him rest from the days of calamity,
While the pit is digged for the wicked. (?)
For the Lord will not cast off his people,
Neither will he forsake his inheritance.
But judgement shall return unto righteousness:
And all the upright in heart shall follow it.

Who will rise up for me against the evildoers?
Or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity?

Unless the Lord were my help,
My soul would soon dwell in Silence.
If I think, My foot slippeth;
Thy lovingkindness, O Lord, holdeth me up.
In the multitude of my cares within me
Thy comforts delight my soul.

Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee,
Which frameth mischief by law?
They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous,
And condemn the innocent blood.
But the Lord is my high tower,
And my God is the rock of my refuge.
And he shall bring upon them their own iniquity,
And shall cut them off in their own wickedness;
Yea, the Lord our God shall cut them off.

§ 26. *The one hundred and second Psalm.*—The following Psalm (cii) was clearly written for communal use, and the speaker is Israel. But the subtle manner in which individual and national purposes are interwoven in the Psalter is illustrated by the heading given to this particular hymn, which dedicates it to the use of the individual sufferer. It is called: 'A prayer for the afflicted when he fainteth, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord.' The Israelite is so bound up with Israel in Israel's joys and sorrows, and the tact of the Psalmists is usually so delicate, that the communal Psalm is available for the individual just as in other cases Psalms for individuals may have been adapted for the community. The date of the Psalm is disputed; but there are only two alternatives. It belongs either to the period of Nehemiah before the walls were rebuilt, or to the days of desolation under Antiochus Epiphanes. The 'Perfects' in the penultimate stanza are an admirable and conspicuous instance of the so-called Prophetic Perfect or the Perfect of Certitude. The Psalmist describes the accomplished result of his prayer. In the last stanza he returns to the mournful Present.

Hear my prayer, O Lord,
And let my cry come unto thee.
Hide not thy face from me in the day when I am in trouble;
Incline thine ear unto me:
In the day when I call answer me speedily.

For my days are consumed like smoke,
And my bones are burned as an hearth.
My heart is smitten, and withered like grass;
I forget to eat my bread.
By reason of the voice of my groaning
My bones cleave to my skin.
I am like a pelican of the wilderness:
I am become as an owl of the desert.
I watch, and make moan
As a lonely bird upon the roof.

Mine enemies reproach me all the day;
And they that are mad against me use my name as a curse.
I have eaten ashes like bread,
And mingled my drink with weeping,
Because of thine indignation and thy wrath:
For thou hast lifted me up, and cast me down.
My days are like a shadow that declineth;
And I wither like the grass.

But thou, O Lord, art enthroned for ever;
And thy remembrance endureth unto all generations.
Thou wilt arise, and have mercy upon Zion:
For the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come.
For thy servants take pleasure in her stones,
They compassionate the dust thereof.

Then the nations shall fear the name of the Lord,
And all the kings of the earth thy glory.
For the Lord hath built up Zion,
He hath appeared in his glory.
He hath regarded the prayer of the destitute,
And not despised their prayer.

This shall be written for the generation to come:
And the people which shall be created shall praise the Lord.
For he hath looked down from his holy height;
From heaven did the Lord behold the earth;
To hear the groaning of the prisoner;
To loose those that were appointed to death;
That they may declare the name of the Lord in Zion,
And his praise in Jerusalem;
When the peoples are gathered together,
And the kingdoms, to serve the Lord.

He hath weakened my strength in the way;
He hath shortened my days.
O my God, I cry, take me not away in the midst of my days:
Thy years are throughout all generations.
Of old hast thou laid the foundations of the earth:
And the heavens are the work of thy hands.
They shall perish, but thou shalt endure:
Yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment;
As a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed:
But thou art ever the same,
And thy years shall have no end.
The children of thy servants shall abide,
And their seed shall be established before thee.

§ 27. *The one hundred and thirty-seventh Psalm.*—The following Psalm (cxxxvii) is a famous religious lyric which seems to reflect the moods of sorrow and of hatred which possessed the souls of the Jewish exiles in Babylonia. But it may have been written not during but shortly after the exile, or again it may quite possibly be a 'dramatic lyric' in Mr. Browning's sense, composed, perchance in the Maccabean period, by a Temple singer who 'identifies himself by sympathy with his exiled predecessors in Babylon.' Babylon stands to him for Syria, just as 'even to the prophets Edom and Babylon were types of the class of Jehovah's enemies.'

By the rivers of Babylon,
There we sat down and wept,
When we remembered Zion.
We hung our harps
Upon the willows in the midst thereof.
For there they that carried us away captive required of us a song;
And they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying,
'Sing us one of the songs of Zion.'

How shall we sing the Lord's song
In a strange land?
If I forget thee, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand waste away.

If I do not remember thee,
Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth;
If I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.

Remember, O Lord, unto the children of Edom
The day of Jerusalem;
Who cried, 'Rase it, rase it,
Even to the foundation thereof.'
O daughter of Babylon, the destroyer,
Happy shall he be, that payeth thee back
For the deeds which thou didst do unto us.
Happy shall he be, that taketh
And dasheth thy little ones against the stones.

It would be tempting to omit the third stanza. But in a Psalm so famous as this it would be historically unfair. Doubtless the Psalmist had seen and heard of many deeds of heartless cruelty, which partly palliate the cruelty of his own heart's desire. For us, however, the close of the Psalm destroys the beauty of its opening. Realizing as we do that tit for tat is not the highest moral law, the vengeance cry of the Psalmist belongs for us to a lower and superseded religious plane. Yet it is not for us to forget that it is not *our* wisdom and piety which enable us to detect the religious deficiencies of our ancestors. Rather is it the sifted piety and purified wisdom of the past which enable the present to start at a higher moral and religious level. As the old saying goes, 'Dwarfs on giants' shoulders see further than giants.'

§ 28. *Psalms one hundred and forty-one and one hundred and forty-two.*—Part of the short Psalm which follows (cxli) is hopelessly corrupt. The date of composition is probably the Greek but pre-Maccabean period, when many of the richer and more worldly Jews were falling away from their religion. Baethgen supposes the righteous reprover to be God: in that case it is the pious community in whose name and for whose needs the prayer is put forth.

Lord, I cry unto thee; make haste unto me;
Give ear unto my voice when I cry unto thee.
Let my prayer appear before thee as incense;
And the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth;
Guard the door of my lips.

Incline not my heart to any evil thing,
To practise wicked deeds with men that work iniquity:
And let me not eat of their dainties.
Let the righteous smite me in lovingkindness and chasten me;
Such good oil let not my head refuse.

For mine eyes are unto thee, O God, the Lord;
In thee is my trust; pour not out my soul.
Keep me from the snares which they have laid for me,
And the gins of the workers of iniquity.
Let the wicked fall into their own nets,
Whilst that I withal escape.

'I cry unto thee; make haste unto me.' The Midrash says: 'What does "make haste unto me" mean? I hastened to fulfil thy commands; so hasten thou to me. What is the matter like? It is like a man who had to defend himself before a judge. He saw that all his opponents had advocates to plead for them. So he called to the judge, and said: All require advocates and have them, but I have no advocate. Be thou my advocate as well as my judge. So spake David: Some rely on their good works, and some on the good works of their fathers, but I rely on thee. Though I have no good works, yet since I cry unto thee, answer me.'

The following Psalm (cxlii) repeats familiar complaints and ends in customary confidence.

I cry unto the Lord with my voice;
With my voice unto the Lord I make my supplication.
I pour out my complaint before him;
I shew before him my trouble,
When my spirit is overwhelmed within me.
In the way wherein I walk, they have privily laid a snare for me;
But thou knowest my path.
I look on my right hand, and gaze on my left;
Escape hath failed me; no man careth for my soul.

I cry unto thee, O Lord:
I say, 'Thou art my refuge,
My portion in the land of the living.
Attend unto my cry; for I am brought very low:
Deliver me from my persecutors; for they are stronger than I.

Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name:
The righteous shall glory in me; for thou wilt deal
bountifully with me.'

'The righteous shall glory in me.' The verb is doubtful. Who are the righteous? Have we here a purely 'individual' Psalm, and is the 'prison' to be taken quite literally? Or is it the members of the community who bewail their lot? In that case the 'prison' must be interpreted metaphorically of misfortune, and the 'righteous' must be the future proselytes, whom Israel's deliverance and triumph will surely bring to the knowledge and worship of the true God. The term 'righteous' would then be used, as the grammarians say, 'proleptically,' i. e. by way of anticipation.

§ 29. *The one hundred and forty-third Psalm.*—We have now reached the last Psalm to be included in the present group from the third collection (cxliii). It is largely made up of reminiscences, yet original touches are not wanting. The fifth line is notable: 'In thy sight no man living is righteous' (translated in the Authorized Version: 'In thy sight shall no man living be justified'). The Psalmist does not ask for God's deliverance on the ground of his righteousness. In an appeal to the All-righteous, what can his own feeble, human righteousness avail? At the best it is but poor. But God's righteousness is merciful. It does not expect from man more than man can render. Therefore even a cry for deliverance can appeal to God's righteousness. With him and in him, goodness, justice, righteousness and love are one and the same: mere synonyms and nothing more. For God alone is truly One. Note too the appeal to the Divine Spirit. Once again we have an allusion to that mysterious interchange and combination of human effort and divine grace which render man capable of his best deeds and highest self. 'The right or level path' is used here in a moral sense; elsewhere it is a metaphor for prosperity. The only jarring note is struck in the last two lines. Shall we who use this Psalm for our own devotional purposes give to them another interpretation? For who are our real enemies? Who most sorely afflict our soul? Our own evil thoughts, our own wicked desires, our own temptations. From these, O God, deliver us indeed. Help us, O Lord, in thy lovingkindness, to overcome them: through thine aid may we destroy them and cut them off.

Hear my prayer, O Lord,
In thy righteousness give ear to my supplications,
Answer me in thy righteousness.

And enter not into judgement with thy servant:
For in thy sight no man living is righteous.
For the enemy hath pursued my soul;
He hath crushed my life down to the ground;
He hath made me to dwell in darkness, as those that have been long dead.
Therefore is my spirit overwhelmed within me;
My heart within me is appalled.

I remember the days of old;
I meditate on all thy works;
I muse on the works of thy hands.
I stretch forth my hands unto thee:
My soul thirsteth after thee, as a thirsty land.
Hear me speedily, O Lord: my spirit faileth:
Hide not thy face from me,
Lest I become like unto them that go down into the pit.
Satisfy me with thy lovingkindness in the morning;
For in thee do I trust:
Make me to know the way wherein I should walk;
For I lift up my soul unto thee.
Deliver me, O Lord, from mine enemies:
I hope in thee.
Teach me to do thy will,
For thou art my God:
Let thy good spirit lead me in the right path.
Quicken me, O Lord, for thy name's sake:
Through thy righteousness bring my soul out of trouble.
And in thy lovingkindness cut off mine enemies,
And destroy all them that afflict my soul:
For I am thy servant.

'Enter not into judgement.' '*To enter into judgement* is an expression used of the plaintiff, not of the judge. God's *righteousness* consists in this very fact, that he does not appear as a complainant against the pious, endeavouring to detect their most secret sins and bring them to punishment. In that case no one could win his suit against him' (Wellhausen).

'Teach me to do thy will.' These six short words are the concentrated essence of true prayer. Make us see what action is in best accordance with thee—that is, with Righteousness; give

us power to do it. Direct our understanding; purify our hearts; strengthen our will.

§ 30. *The eightieth Psalm.*—I propose to close the group with four Psalms which seem to reflect one and the same definite historical situation. I have therefore taken them out of the order in which they come in the Psalter, and we go back from the third collection to the second. They are national Psalms written amid persecution, suffering and war. From all we know of the post-exilic history of the Jews, they must be assigned either to the reign of Artaxerxes Ochus or to the era of the Maccabees. With regard to the last three of them, at any rate, the later date seems to me by far the more probable. The intense consciousness that they were suffering for a religious cause was more characteristic of the Jews under Antiochus than of those under Ochus. And were synagogues already frequent in the Persian period?

As I have already said, all the four Psalms belong to the second collection. That is one reason why Professor Robertson-Smith and other scholars think they cannot be Maccabean. They would limit the appearance of *Maccabean* Psalms to the *third* and *latest* collection.

First shall come Psalm lxxx. Note that 'Turn us again' means 'Restore our prosperity.' The 'vine' is of course Israel; the 'mountains' represent the southern, the 'cedars of God' the northern frontier; the 'sea' is the Mediterranean, and the 'river' the Euphrates: i. e. the western and eastern boundaries.

Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel,
  Thou that leadest Joseph like a flock;
  Thou that art enthroned upon the cherubim, shine forth.
Stir up thy strength,
  And come and save us.
Turn us again, O God,
  Cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.

O Lord God of hosts,
  How long wilt thou be angry against the prayer of thy people?
Thou feedest them with the bread of tears;
  And givest them tears to drink in great measure.
Thou makest us a strife unto our neighbours:
  And our enemies laugh among themselves.
Turn us again, O God of hosts,
  Cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.

Thou broughtest a vine out of Egypt:
Thou didst cast out the nations and plant it.
Thou madest room before it,
And it put forth its roots and filled the land.
The hills were covered with the shadow of it,
And the cedars of God with its boughs.
It spread out its branches unto the sea,
And its shoots unto the river.
Why hast thou then broken down its hedges,
So that all they who pass by the way do rend it?
The boar out of the wood doth tear it,
And the wild beast of the field doth devour it.
Turn us again, O God of hosts
[*Cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved*].

Look down from heaven, and behold,
And visit this vine and establish it.
They have burned it with fire, they have cut it down:
May they perish at the rebuke of thy countenance.
Let thy hand be upon the man of thy right hand,
Upon the son of man whom thou hast chosen for thyself.
So will we not go back from thee:
Quicken us, and we will call upon thy name,
Turn us again, O Lord God of hosts,
Cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.

§ 31. *The seventy-ninth Psalm*: '*Deus, venerunt gentes.*'—Of the next Psalm (lxxix) the only adequate commentary is the story of the Maccabean persecutions, which we shall hear in the next section.

O Lord, the nations are come into thine inheritance;
They have defiled thy holy temple,
They have laid Jerusalem in heaps.
They have given the dead bodies of thy servants to be food unto the birds of the heaven,
The flesh of thy loving ones unto the beasts of the earth.
Their blood they have shed like water round about Jerusalem,
And there was none to bury them.
We are become a reproach to our neighbours,
A scorn and a derision to them that are round about us.

How long, O Lord, will thou be angry for ever,
How long will thy passion burn like fire?

Pour out thy wrath upon the nations that do not know thee,
And upon the kingdoms that call not upon thy name.
For they have devoured Jacob,
And laid his homestead waste.
O remember not against us the iniquities of our ancestors;
Let thy tender mercies speedily come to meet us:
For we are brought very low.

Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of thy name:
And deliver us, and purge away our sins, for thy name's sake.
Wherefore should the nations say, 'Where is their God?'
Let there be made known among the nations in our sight
The revenging of the blood of thy servants which hath been shed.
Let the sighing of the prisoner come before thee;
According to the greatness of thy power preserve thou those that are appointed to die;
And render unto our neighbours sevenfold into their bosom
Their reproach, wherewith they have reproached thee, O Lord.
So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture
Will give thee thanks for ever:
We will shew forth thy praise to all generations.

§ 32. *Psalm seventy-four*: '*Ut quid, Deus, repulisti.*'—The following Psalm (lxxiv) evidently reflects the same historical situation as its predecessor.

O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever?
Why doth thine anger smoke against the sheep of thy pasture?
Remember thy congregation, which thou didst acquire of old;
Which thou didst redeem to be of thine inheritance;
Yon mount Zion, whereon thou hast dwelt.
Lift up thy feet unto the perpetual desolations;
The enemy hath ill used all in the sanctuary.
Thine adversaries roar in the midst of thy Place of Meeting;
They set up their signs for signs. (?)
They destroy as they who lift up
Axes in the forest thicket. (?)
They break off the carved work thereof;
They hew down with axes and hammers. (?)

They have set on fire thy sanctuary,
They have defiled the dwelling place of thy name unto the ground.
They said in their hearts, 'Let us destroy them altogether':
They have burned up all the synagogues of God in the land.

We see not our signs:
There is no more any prophet:
Neither is there among us any that knoweth how long.
O God, how long shall the adversary reproach,
Shall the enemy blaspheme thy name for ever?
Why withdrawest thou thy hand;
And keepest thy right hand within thy bosom?

But God is my King of old,
Working deliverances in the midst of the earth.
Thou didst divide the sea by thy strength:
Thou brakest the heads of the dragons in the waters.
Thou didst cleave the fountain and the flood:
Thou driedst up everlasting rivers.
The day is thine, the night also is thine:
Thou didst establish luminary and sun.
Thou didst set all the bounds of the earth:
Thou didst make summer and winter.

Remember how the enemy hath reviled thee, O Lord,
And how a foolish people have blasphemed thy name.
O deliver not unto death the soul of thy turtledove:
Forget not the lives of thine afflicted for ever.
Look upon thy covenant:
For the dark places of the earth are full of cruelty.
O let not the oppressed be turned back ashamed:
Let the poor and needy praise thy name.
Arise, O God, plead thy cause:
Remember how the fool reviletheth thee daily.
Forget not the voice of thine enemies,
The tumult of those that rise up against thee mounteth up continually.

'They set up their signs for signs.' A difficult and perhaps corrupt line. Are these signs military banners or heathen images and symbols? And how are the signs set up as *signs*? Signs

of what? Of supremacy? The Place of Meeting is the Temple, and the difficult and corrupt verse with the axes describes its spoliation and ruin.

'Synagogues'; the translation is literal. For the Hebrew is 'meeting-places,' and that is the meaning of synagogues.

In the third stanza there are allusions to the Exodus and the subsequent events.

'The dark places of the earth': a doubtful verse. Is it that the earth is darkened by cruelty, or does it literally refer to the secret hiding-places in which the Jewish fugitives took refuge? But these were shelters from cruelty, filled with its victims.

§ 33. *The forty-fourth Psalm*: '*Deus, auribus nostris audivimus.*'—The last of these four Psalms (xliv) seems also clearly Maccabean. Note the emphasis laid on the religious character of the persecution under which the people are labouring. 'For thy sake are we killed all the day long.'

We have heard with our ears, O God,
Our fathers have told us,
What work thou didst in their days, in the times of old.
Thou didst drive out the nations with thy hand, and didst uproot them;
Thou didst afflict the peoples and cast them out.
For they got not the land in possession by their own sword,
Neither did their own arm save them:
But thy right hand, and thine arm, and the light of thy countenance,
Because thou hadst a favour unto them.

Thou art my King, O God;
Command deliverances for Jacob.
Through thee will we push down our enemies:
Through thy name will we tread them under that rise up against us.
For I will not trust in my bow,
Neither shall my sword save me.
But thou hast saved us from our enemies,
And hast put them to shame that hated us.
In God we boast all the day long,
And praise thy name for ever.

But thou hast cast off, and put us to shame;
And goest not forth with our armies.

Thou makest us to turn back from the enemy:
And they which hate us plunder at their will.
Thou hast made us like sheep for meat;
And hast scattered us among the nations.
Thou sellest thy people for nought,
And makest no gain by their price.
Thou makest us a reproach to our neighbours,
A scorn and a derision to them that are round about us.
Thou makest us a byword among the heathen,
A shaking of the head among the people.
My confusion is continually before me,
And the shame of my face hath covered me,
For the voice of him that reproacheth and blasphemeth;
By reason of the enemy and avenger.

All this is come upon us; yet have we not forgotten thee,
Neither have we been false to thy covenant.
Our heart is not turned back,
Neither have our steps declined from thy way;
That thou shouldest have crushed us in the place of jackals,
And covered us with the shadow of death.
If we had forgotten the name of our God,
Or stretched out our hands to a strange god;
Would not God search this out?
For he knoweth the secrets of the heart.
Nay, but for thy sake are we killed all the day long;
We are counted as sheep for the slaughter.

Awake, why sleepest thou, O Lord?
Arise, cast us not off for ever.
Wherefore hidest thou thy face,
And forgettest our affliction and our oppression?
For our soul is bowed down to the dust:
Our body cleaveth unto the earth.
Arise for our help,
And redeem us for thy lovingkindness' sake.

The beginning of the third stanza seems to show, as Professor Wellhausen says, that 'hitherto the fight with the heathen has been successful, but now the Israelite army (which all through the Psalm is the speaker, and rightly regards itself as the representative of the people) has suffered a severe defeat which has placed everything in danger.'

'For thy sake are we killed all the day long.' So spake the Maccabean warriors. And even now, after more than 2,000 years have elapsed, many millions of Jews can still say, 'For thy sake are we persecuted, for thy sake do we suffer all the day long.' As for us in English-speaking lands, where liberty and enlightenment prevail, should we not strive to change the verb and to say, 'For thy sake, for thy cause do we live our lives?'

CHAPTER III

THE FIFTY-FIRST PSALM

§ 1. *A whole chapter for a single Psalm.*—Some thirty-eight Psalms constituted the last chapter. The present chapter is to be occupied by but one. Nor is that single Psalm of any considerable length. It has only seventeen (or perhaps nineteen) verses. But I place it in a chapter by itself, both because it is very great and noble, as well as because it is not easy to classify it with any of the other categories into which I have roughly divided these selections from the Psalter. It has affinities with several Psalms of the group just ended, as well as with several other Psalms which are to follow it, but yet it stands out sufficiently from them all to justify its possessing a special and separate chapter for itself.

The Psalm for which I make this lofty claim is the fifty-first. It has already been quoted in Part I, where I ventured to call it 'perhaps the noblest penitential hymn in all the world.' Professor Cheyne says of it that there is no passage in the Hebrew Bible 'at once more inspiring and inspired.' Mr. Mason says, 'None of the other Psalms have had half the effect upon men's minds that this one has exercised. It has a library of its own. The more one meditates upon it, the richer it seems, and that unendingly, is most folks' comment.'

The Psalm has occupied, as is only natural, a high place of honour in the Synagogue and in the Church.

The opening words are well known both in the Greek and the Latin versions. In the Greek *Elcêson me, ho theos,* 'Pity me, O God,' produced *Kurie eleison,* 'Lord, have pity,' a famous liturgical formula. We often read of Roman Catholic priests chanting the *miserere* without perhaps at once calling to mind that it is the fifty-first Psalm: *Miserere mei, Deus.*

In the Christian Church seven Psalms out of the whole are specially known as the penitential Psalms. Of these, four have already passed before us (vi, xxxviii, cii and cxliii), while two others (xxxii and cxxx) have still to come. The seventh is our present Psalm. But though there are points of connexion between it and the remaining six, there are also points of difference. Its separate place can still be justified. For the four penitential Psalms which we have already heard, as well as Psalm cxxx, are petitions for help from surrounding trouble, while Psalm xxxii is prevailingly didactic. But in Psalm li the affliction seems wholly inward; the deliverance which the petitioner seeks from God is a deliverance from sin and its bondage, a deliverance which may indeed have its outward issues, but which in the first instance is sought for its own sake. Outward circumstance has little to do with the Psalmist's prayer. And that is why the Psalm is so broad and human, coming home to us alike in prosperity and in sorrow. We only need to be human to appreciate it. Woe to us indeed if that passionate cry does not appeal to us, if we cannot make it our own.

§ 2. *Who is the speaker?*—But I pass now to a closer consideration of the Psalm as a whole. Can we use it as the voice of our own hearts, as our own best prayer, without reading into it something more than its writer intended? Did he mean by it just what we mean by it? Or have we to apply, enlarge or modify his words and meaning for our own spiritual edification? It is a delicate and difficult question. It is delicate because we have to preserve a happy mean. In their aversion from reading modern ideas into the original, or in their rigid application of a particular theory, some commentators, as it seems to me, rob the Psalm of much of its depth and significance. They will not let it mean as much as to my mind it was meant to mean. They will not let it be as spiritual as to my mind it was meant to be. And it is a difficult question because it is, after all, an impossible task to realize and reproduce with accuracy the complicated religious feelings of a man who lived more than two thousand years ago. Things to us clearly separate and separable may in his mind have been always united together, and feelings, which to us seem only causable in one way, may to him have been caused in quite another.

The main point to settle is as so often before, Who is the speaker? Is he an individual, who refers only to his own sins and to his own sinful nature, or is he in some sense or other the representative of his people or community?

At the first blush, if ever a Psalm were the outpouring of an

individual soul, referring only to the individual's own feelings and sorrows, it would seem to be this one. And secondly, if the collective or national interpretation impairs the spiritual value of any Psalm, it would seem to impair the value of this one. 'Create in me a clean heart': to us such a prayer is intensely personal; it is offered up 'alone to the Alone': surely then the original writer did the same. Surely he was only thinking of himself! And if he was not thinking only of himself, how utterly different (we are tempted to add, how exceedingly inferior) his meaning must have been to our own!

When the Psalm was incorporated into a collection of Davidic hymns, it was not difficult to discover the particular incident in David's career to which it ought to be ascribed. It must have been written after the great sin of David's life—the murder of Uriah. Hence the editor affixed the heading, 'A Psalm of David, when Nathan the prophet came unto him, after he had taken Bathsheba.' But that the author lived many centuries after David is as certain as that several passages of the Psalm are inapplicable to the supposed situation, and could not have been written by the Judaean king. The heading need not further concern us, except in so far as to ask, Was the editor right in his individualizing interpretation?

And the answer must be: No, he was not. Nevertheless it can, I think, be shown that even though the individualizing interpretation be wrong, the Psalm still retains its religious and spiritual value.

We have seen that the Psalter as it grew and expanded became the hymn-book of the Second Temple, and that the Psalmists, so far as we can discover, did not write as isolated individuals, but as Israelites, as members of the community whose joys and sorrows, whose wishes and aspirations, were theirs. It is these communal joys, sorrows and aspirations to which they gave expression in the Psalms. *But they did not write them for the community without feeling their contents themselves.* Because they felt, they wrote. They did not merely write for others to feel. Yet in many and many a Psalm where the pronouns are 'I' and 'me,' we have observed that though, or rather just because, the writers' words are the true outcome of their own experience, they speak as representatives of Israel, in whose true relationship to God the individual author found the type and pattern of his own. For the individual's religious life was not lived apart from Israel as a whole. He was not only a man, but also an Israelite, and his relationship to God was not the general relation of man to Deity, but that of an Israelite to Jehovah, who, though God of the whole universe,

had special relations with Israel. The individual Israelite could not and did not wish to free himself from the communal bond. Hence his prayers, his confessions of sin, his communion with God, shift unconsciously from the one point of view to the other. Now he speaks as an individual, now in the name of his nation, now as a member of that people within a people (the community of believers) who alone represented Israel before God, and alone understood the true meaning of its history, its sorrows and its mission. It is this peculiar combination which makes the question, 'Who is the "I" of the Psalter?' so difficult to answer. The individual receives from his people half, and more than half, of his religious life. In some respects this fusion of individualism and nationalism makes the Psalms less broadly human than many a modern hymn. On the other hand, it gives to them their warmth and glow, and stamps them with a strange intensity of their own.

What is true of so many other Psalms is *a priori* probably true of the fifty-first. In other words, it is probable that the 'I' represents a certain fusion between the individual and the community, and that the subject-matter has as much a communal as an individual reference. This probability might be regarded as a certainty if the last two verses of the Psalm as we now have it were composed by the author of the remainder. But in spite of all that has recently been urged to that effect, I am still unconvinced: I still think that we may justifiably sever this most spiritual of Psalms from its, to us, less edifying appendix. Yet even without the appendix there are various phrases in the body of the Psalm which almost imperatively demand a semi-national interpretation. The best plan may be to let this great penitential hymn now speak for itself, and then to discuss the question, 'Who is the speaker?' in the course of a brief commentary on the more salient or difficult verses. In this place I omit the last two verses.

§ 3. *Translation of the Psalm.*—Have mercy upon me,
O God, according to thy lovingkindness;
According to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot
out my transgressions.
Wash me throughly from mine iniquity,
And cleanse me from my sin.

For I acknowledge my transgressions,
And my sin is ever before me.
Against thee, thee only, have I sinned,
And done what is evil in thy sight,
That thou mightest be justified when thou speakest,
And be clear when thou judgest.

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity,
And in sin did my mother conceive me.
Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts:
Therefore in the secret place make me to know wisdom.
Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.
Make me to hear joy and gladness;
That the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.
Hide thy face from my sins,
And blot out all mine iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God;
And renew a steadfast spirit within me.
Cast me not away from thy presence;
And take not thy holy spirit from me.
Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation;
And uphold me with a willing spirit.
Then will I teach transgressors thy ways;
And sinners shall be converted unto thee.
Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation:
And my tongue shall sing aloud of thy righteousness.
O Lord, open thou my lips;
And my mouth shall shew forth thy praise.
For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it;
Thou delightest not in burnt offering.
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit:
A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

§ 4. *Explanation of various passages.*—'Blot out my transgressions.' Professor Wellhausen, who adopts the national interpretation in a somewhat crude and extreme form, comments thus: 'The absolution consists in the removal of the punishment,' and on the Psalm generally he says that the heading was suggested by the line: 'Deliver me from bloodguiltiness,' but that 'it prevents a proper understanding of the Psalm. It is not David who offers these petitions, but the Servant of Jehovah, i. e. Israel. The iniquity is secret, not public; committed against God, not man. The *Servant* believes that he is cast off by God. He prays for the restoration of his good conscience towards God, in order that he may execute his prophetic mission, the conversion of the heathen. The whole Psalm is based on Isa. 40 ff.' (i. e. the Second

Isaiah, Part I, pp. 485-501). I venture to think that this interpretation is quite inadequate. 'The absolution consists in the removal of the punishment.' Not merely so, if so at all. What is asked for is that the sinner may be purified, that he may be helped to sin no more, that the heavy consciousness and burden of his iniquities may be removed from him.

Most readers will feel convinced that the writer of the Psalm must have had a real consciousness of personal guilt. The passionate intensity of the words imply that their author felt what he wrote in the depths of his own soul, that he wrote about himself. The sin, we feel, must have been his own. Now if the writer was merely personating Israel, could this have been the case? Would not the Psalm then become a mere dramatic lyric? Strange as it may seem at first sight, it is possible to adopt a semi-national interpretation without being obliged to abandon a belief in the writer's consciousness of personal guilt. Though he has the community in view, he does not forget himself. He is a sinner too, and if he writes 'Cleanse me from my sin' for Israel, he also writes it for himself. Why, because he remembers his people, should he be thought to ignore his own personal relation with God? Is it possible that he who writes with so vivid a consciousness of the burden of sin, can himself feel personally free from its pressure and misery? Does he not speak for himself as well as for others?

Again, in addition to his own individual sins, he is closely affected by the sins of his people. He is grieved unto the soul by the sins of Israel, even the sins of past generations as well as of his own contemporaries—those sins which sorely hinder the advent of the Messianic age. The close solidarity of the individual members of the community to one another and to Israel as a whole is almost impossible for us to realize. The words 'Cleanse me from my sin' could have a national as well as an individual meaning, and yet this national meaning could also be personally felt. We may perhaps realize this point of view better if we substitute 'our' for 'my.' 'Cleanse us from our sins.' If we put forth this prayer in synagogue, do we not pray that the community may be cleansed of its sins? and do we not feel as if in a sense we were all individually responsible for all, just as we all bear a collective punishment? The honour of Israel is tarnished, and the community as a whole suffers, through the villany of a few; we ourselves may be guiltless of any share in that villany, and yet do we not in a sort of way feel personally involved? Who can tell where our influence and the influence of our influence may cease? If fifty of us had been better, might

not the fifty-first have lived a purer life? We are not separate atoms, whose lives are spent apart, in watertight compartments, unaffecting one another. The community is a living organism.

And if such thoughts come home to us now, far more did they appeal to our distant forefathers in the Babylonian exile, or in the age of Ezra, or in the days of Artaxerxes Ochus. To them the community was indeed an organism, from which they, the limbs, gained their strength and vitality, to which they owed devotion, whose prosperity and sorrows they caused or shared, whose sins and guilt were also theirs to increase or to diminish. To them the community was an organism to whose life each generation contributed and belonged. It lived from age to age, and its life in any one generation was conditioned and determined by the character and deeds of the generations that had gone before. Their virtues and their sins were still present in their results, perhaps even in the tendencies which they caused, whether to evil or to good.

We have often noticed the strength and the weakness of this theory, and its measure of inaccuracy and of truth. We have seen one form of it combated by Ezekiel, and we have observed its recurrence, in spite of Ezekiel's vehemence, in later ages. And in our fifty-first Psalm we may once more perceive it—in a form with which we can largely sympathize, and which seems to possess a valid measure of permanent truth.

'My sin is ever before me.' His own sins and Israel's are ever before him. His sins help him to realize the better the sins of his people. His own individual conscience becomes the conscience of Israel. For the time being he thinks himself Israel. He and his people are one. His moral pulse beats in time with theirs.

'Against thee, thee only, have I sinned.' This is one of the passages which require a national or communal interpretation. As Professor Wellhausen says: 'In relation to the men who threaten him, i.e. to the heathen, the Servant is guiltless. His iniquity, therefore, must have been against God alone.' Israel has broken God's commandments, and not the ordinances of man. It is, as Professor Cheyne says, 'only Israel personified, or one who feels himself entirely united to his people in guilt and punishment, who could say "against thee, thee only."' But I cannot agree with Professor Wellhausen when he adds: 'He (i.e. Israel) does not know wherein it (his iniquity) consists, but confesses it in advance, and acknowledges the righteousness of God.' Then, indeed, the urgent prayer for a clean heart were hollow and unreal. There is a true consciousness of sin in

each individual's heart. The speaker is sinful as an individual, and Israel is sinful as a community.

'That thou mightest be justified.' In Israel's afflictions, recognized as the result and punishment of Israel's sins, God's justice is revealed and made manifest.

'I was brought forth in iniquity.' No dogma of original sin is here implied. 'All that the speaker means is that he belongs to an erring race, and (therefore) drew his first breath in sin. So far as he is an individual, he recalls the fact that his own mother, and that mother's mother, sinned; so far as he represents the nation, that Israel from the first was prone to infidelity' (Cheyne).

'Behold, thou desirest.' Another plea. God does not desire sin, but 'truth' or fidelity. Let God, then, give that which without his wish can not be won. 'Wisdom' is the practical wisdom of which the beginning is the fear of God, the love of God its crown. To be real, it must be inward, rooted in 'the dark and secret place' of the soul. Unfortunately the two words translated 'inward parts' and 'secret place' respectively are very obscure and doubtful.

'Purge me with hyssop.' The Psalmist uses the metaphor of the hyssop, because this plant was employed in the outward purification of the body after defilement in the legislation of the priestly code.

'Wash me.' 'Sin is too deeply ingrained for the sinner himself to efface it; God himself must do this wonder' (Cheyne). Sin is regarded as an inward leprosy or defilement which only the help and grace of God can wholly cleanse away.

'Make me to hear joy and gladness.' If the text be sound, the meaning must be, Grant that Israel may hear the joyous cries of the individuals who compose it. But Cheyne, following the Syriac version, would read: 'Fill me with joy and gladness.'

'The bones which thou hast broken.' 'The bones represent the whole nature of man' (Cheyne). The 'broken' bones do not merely represent affliction, or, if they do, the affliction is inward rather than outward. But these broken bones rather represent the nature which God has awoken to the crushing conviction of its sin. The consciousness of pardon, i. e. of overcoming sin, or of feeling free from it, fills the heart with gladness and joy.

'Create in me a clean heart.' Compare the prophecies in Ezekiel of the new heart which God will give to the restored and regenerate community (Part I, p. 480).

'Renew a steadfast spirit within me,' i. e. Give me a new spirit which shall be steadfast, which shall not swerve from the fear and love of God, which shall keep me in the true way. The speaker

has himself in view as well as the community. He himself yearns for the clean heart, as we all, following in his footsteps and echoing his words, yearn and pray for it. But at the same time he asks it for Israel.

'Cast me not away.' God's presence and his holy spirit are synonyms. The expression 'holy spirit' is only found in one other passage in the Hebrew Bible. 'The Holy Spirit,' says Professor Wellhausen, 'is the prophetic inspiration, the divine influence from which Revelation springs.' But this verse too has an individual as well as a national significance. For the speaker, as we have again and again to remember, is an Israelite, and the attitude of God towards Israel (as he believed it) was also the attitude of God towards himself. It is only that his relation to God was more influenced by national considerations than ours; with us it is man and God; with him it was rather Israel and Jehovah. The punishment of Israel consists in a mysterious withdrawal of the Divine Spirit from its midst; the prerogative and privilege of Israel consist in its mysterious presence. The Spirit is holy. When Israel is holy, then the Spirit is in its midst; when the Spirit is 'there,' Israel is holy. Sin means alienation from God; virtue attracts the divine presence. And the mystery remains: goodness brings us near to God; sin removes us from him. But our effort to approach him is never unaided; our strength is not wholly our own.

'The joy of thy salvation.' 'Outward blessings,' says Professor Cheyne, 'are at any rate included. Sin is attended by chastisement; forgiveness by an equally visible deliverance. So it is with the individual; so also with the nation. The Psalmist, even if referring to his own sins and chastisements, regards them as shared by every other Israelite. The burden of guilt removed, he (and such as he) can obey the divinely given impulse, walking in the ways of God.' Professor Wellhausen translates: 'Give me once more the glad sense of thy help.'

'A willing spirit.' 'A spirit eager and ready to do right' (Driver).

'Then will I teach.' Another verse which, in its close parallelism with many similar passages, requires a national interpretation. When Israel has been divinely purified, it can turn to its true mission: it can teach the true religion among the nations. The aspirations of the Second Isaiah are accepted and endorsed by the Psalmist, just as the teachings of the older prophets about material sacrifices have also been absorbed by him. The 'sinners' are the erring nations, the 'transgressors' may include a reference to apostate Jews. For the mission of the Servant is first to them and then to the Gentiles.

'Deliver me from bloodguiltiness.' A very difficult verse. Perhaps Professor Cheyne's explanation is the most satisfactory. It runs as follows: 'The Hebrew writers are wont to specify some typical sin or sins, where we should rather employ a generic term. Thus, "Your hands are full of bloodshed;" "they build up Zion with bloodshed;" "for his unjust gain I smote him." Another peculiarity of theirs is to speak of sins when they mean rather the punishment of sins. So that the petition, "Deliver me from bloodshed" (so literally), means "Deliver me from those heinous sins (such as murder) which led Israel captive in the past." This accounts for the reference which follows to God's "righteousness." Jehovah is equally "righteous," when he sends and when he removes chastisements.'

But other commentators explain quite differently. The Hebrew word is the plural of 'blood,' and, as Professor Cheyne says, must primarily mean 'bloodshed.' Hence it is supposed by some that the 'bloodshed' does not refer to any sin which Israel has committed or might commit, but to bloodshed inflicted by others upon it. 'Save me from my blood being shed,' or, as Professor Wellhausen says, 'from peril of death. The danger arises from the heathen. As against them Israel is in the right, and can appeal to the righteousness of God.'

'A broken and a contrite heart.' The word 'contrite' (which accurately translates the Hebrew *nidkeh*, literally 'crushed') comes from the Vulgate. The verse there runs: '*Sacrificium Deo spiritus contribulatus: cor contritum et humiliatum, Deus, non despicies.*' *Contribulo* means to *bruise*, to *crush*, and *contribulatus* effectively renders the Hebrew *nishbarah*, broken. *Contero* also means properly to crush, to pound, to crumble; and *contritum* is here used as a synonym for *contribulatum*. The Hebrew has the same word as before: *nishbar*, broken. The metaphorical use in English of *contrite* for penitent is derived from this passage of the Vulgate. Thus Wycliffe's first version runs: *Sacrifise to God, a spiritt holly trublid; a contrit herte and mekid, God, thou shalt not despise.* In the second version, revised by John Purvey (about 1388), the rendering is much the same: *A sacrifice to God is a spirit troblid; God, thou shalt not dispise a contrit herte and maad meke.* ('*Troubled*' is used in a subjective sense, as meaning 'anxious,' 'grieved,' 'in trouble,' 'in tribulation.') When we come to Coverdale, the *troubled spirit* is still retained; but for the less accurate 'meek' (representing the Vulgate '*humiliatum*') is now substituted 'contrite,' while 'broken' takes the place of 'contrite' in the translation of *nishbar*. So we get: '*The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt*

not despise.' The Genevan Bible renders: *The sacrifices of God are a contrite spirit; a contrite and broken heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*' The Bishops' Bible introduces a new rendering which did not maintain itself: *Sacrifices for God is a mortified spirit; O Lord, thou wilt not despise a mortified and an humble heart.* Finally, in the Authorized Version, we get at last to a version which is no less literal than beautiful: *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise*—a rendering which the Revised Version has rightly found no necessity to change. I hope my readers may be as interested as I have been myself in tracing the various forms which this superb verse has assumed in the various English translations.

§ 5. *The last two verses of the Psalm.*—'For thou desirest not sacrifice.' In these sublime and soul-stirring sentences the great Psalm culminates and (as I believe) concludes. True penitence can no further go. I cannot perceive myself that we have here no true end of the Psalm; I discern no 'abruptness.' The Psalmist ends with a noble asseveration of the doctrine upon which his whole prayer depends. Can we really imagine that in one and the same breath he would declare that God has no pleasure in sacrifices, and that for his (the Psalmist's) purpose they are valueless, and then immediately proceed to pray for an opportunity to offer them? Such a juxtaposition seems to me a contradiction in terms. And yet in the Hebrew after the line, 'A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise,' the following two verses are appended:—

O do good in thy favour unto Zion;
Build thou the walls of Jerusalem.
Then shalt thou delight in the sacrifices of righteousness,
in burnt offering and whole offering;
Then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.

The relation of the last two verses to the rest of the Psalm depends partly on a question of date. On the old idea that the Psalm was written by David, the last two verses are clearly an addition, and the Jewish commentator, Ibn Ezra, mentions and approves of this supposition. But if the whole Psalm was written in the Exile, the particular difficulty of date disappears. It is this period to which most modern commentators assign it, and the majority of them strenuously maintain that the supposed 'appendix' is really an integral portion of the Psalm. So, for instance,

Professor Robertson-Smith: 'At present, says the Psalmist, God desires no material sacrifice, but will not despise a contrite heart.... But does the Psalmist then mean to say, absolutely and in general, that sacrifice is a superseded thing? No; for he adds that when Jerusalem is rebuilt, the sacrifice of Israel will be pleasing to God. He lives, therefore, in a time when the fall of Jerusalem has temporarily suspended the sacrificial ordinances, but—and this is the great lesson of the Psalm—has not closed the door of forgiveness to the penitent heart.' Professor Cheyne, who does not himself share this view, points out nevertheless that it is in full accordance with a continuous line of Jewish thought. We know how in the mediaeval Jewish liturgy there are constant prayers for the return to Zion, for the rebuilding of the Temple, for the renewal of sacrifices. At present, and while the dispersion lasts, prayer and penitence must take the place of sacrifice. But even while acknowledging their intrinsic superiority, it is never stated that because they are superior, therefore sacrifice will never be restored and need not be prayed for again. 'The Hymn of Unity for the first day of the week' quotes our Psalm and other similar passages, and adds—

'I will build an altar with my broken heart,
And I will break my spirit within me.
I will humble the haughtiness of my heart and of mine eyes,
And I will rend my heart because of the Lord.
The sherds of my spirit are thy sacrifices;
May they come up with favour upon thine altar.'

Yet the author of this hymn could and did also pray for the restoration of the Temple and of its service as the mark and sign of the divine forgiveness unto Israel. He was not conscious of the smallest contradiction.

In one of a remarkable series of articles on the Psalms, Dr. B. Jacob argues strongly for the same view; he undoubtedly proves the close connexion of the Psalter with the Temple, and the intense devotion of the Psalmists to its services. We commit an anachronism if we suppose that spiritual religion and material sacrifices could not go hand in hand. This must be freely acknowledged, and yet I am not persuaded that in this particular instance the proposed application of this undoubted truth is either accurate or justifiable.

The fifty-first Psalm may have been written during the Exile, and the 'appendix' added on to it by another writer of the same period. Or the Psalm may have been written in the Exile, and the appendix added before the building of the walls by Nehemiah. Or the

Psalm may be post-exilic, and the appendix added in the days of Artaxerxes Ochus. (This latter theory would have to assume a breaking down of the walls at that date 'as a part of the cruel punishment inflicted upon the Jews for their revolt.') Or lastly, though the Psalm itself is hardly Maccabean, as Olshausen supposed, I do not see why the appendix could not be so. At any rate, an exilic or post-exilic date is not adverse to a separation of the body of the Psalm from the appendix. And is not the close contiguity of the verses against sacrifices with the prayer for their restoration and acceptance a further proof that both could not have proceeded from the same pen? The Psalmist makes no qualifications: *Thou hast no pleasure in sacrifices.* These are his words. He does not say, 'Thou hast no pleasure *now*, but thou wilt have in the future.' The statement is absolute and general. It seems to me a psychological impossibility that the man whose prayer culminated in the doctrine of the 'broken heart,' could at that very moment have put up a petition for the speedy restoration of those outward rites whose value in the eyes of God he had so deliberately denied. The very form of the last verse, with its overloaded first half and awkward third person in the second half, seems to plead for its later date and separate origin. That for us to-day the worth of the Psalm closes with the 'contrite heart' would be acknowledged on all hands. I am glad to think that on exegetical grounds also the appendix may rightly be omitted.

The greatness and importance of this Psalm have, as I think, not only justified me in placing it in a chapter by itself, but also in commenting upon it at quite exceptional length. I will conclude by recalling the grand use of it made by Rudyard Kipling in his famous Jubilee hymn:—

> *'The shouting and the tumult dies,*
> *The captains and the kings depart,*
> *Still stands thine ancient sacrifice,*
> *A humble and a contrite heart.*
> *Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,*
> *Lest we forget, lest we forget.'*

CHAPTER IV

PSALMS OF HAPPY COMMUNION WITH GOD

§ 1. *The sixteenth Psalm: 'Conserva me, Domine.'*—It was tolerably easy in the second chapter of this section to group together the Psalms written amid trouble and persecution. With many other Psalms classification is more difficult. In this chapter I propose to bring together five Psalms only (or more strictly four and a half), which express a happy serenity of peace, a glad and restful confidence in the worship of God and in communion with him. It must not be supposed that it would be difficult to allocate more than five Psalms to this group. I have, however, preferred to place several other Psalms which could fitly be added to this chapter in other groups. The first three of my five Psalms are from the first collection, while the two last are from the second. They shall follow here according to their order in the Psalter.

Psalm xvi opens the group. One of the most spiritual of the Psalms, it is not without peculiar difficulties. These are partly due to corruptions in the text. Two obscure verses are here omitted.

Preserve me, O God; for in thee do I take refuge.
I say unto the Lord, 'Thou art my Lord:
  I have no higher good than thee.'
The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup;
  Thou art my lot for ever.
The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places;
  Yea, I have a goodly heritage.
I will bless the Lord, who hath given me counsel;
  In the night seasons my thoughts have admonished me.
I have set the Lord always before me;
  With him at my right hand I cannot be moved.

Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth:
My flesh also shall dwell in security.
For thou wilt not give up my soul to Sheol;
Neither wilt thou suffer thy loving one to see the pit.
Thou wilt make known to me the path of life;
In thy presence is fulness of joys;
In thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

Are we to suppose that the concluding five lines of this noble Psalm refer to a life of spiritual beatitude beyond the grave? The question is one of peculiar and fascinating difficulty. At first sight an affirmative answer seems the only reasonable one. But parallel passages in other Psalms, and some other considerations on which I cannot here dwell, compel me to say that it is unlikely that these five lines refer directly and explicitly to the immortality of the soul and of the individual consciousness in our modern sense of the words.

What then is their meaning?

Some commentators, assuming that in this instance the Psalmist is speaking of himself and not sinking himself in Israel, suppose that the last five lines only refer to a temporary escape from imminent peril. In his confidence that God will deliver him from the dangers that now encompass him, the Psalmist ignores the death which must ultimately overtake him. But this explanation does not do full justice to the words. It robs them of their full significance.

Other commentators, again, suppose that the 'I' is Israel. Then the meaning is: Israel, as a community, will live for ever. It will never be destroyed. God will continue to reveal to his people that path of life which is life indeed: a life which is consecrated and transfigured by communion with God, which is illumined by spiritual pleasures, the source and home of which are with him. There may also be, as Professor Cheyne now thinks, a reference to the Messianic age, when this 'fulness of joy' is to be Israel's abiding heritage. But though the words themselves became easy to explain on these lines, another difficulty suggests itself. We have already seen that though Israel or the pious community may be the speaker in a number of seemingly 'individualistic' Psalms, yet the Psalmist himself feels the thoughts which he puts into the mouth of Israel. Only because he has realized them in his own soul, does he embody them in written words. They are the expression and outcome of his own experience; Israel speaks through him. If, for instance, he lets Israel say, 'I have no higher good than thee,' 'The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant

places,' he does so because he feels the truth of these words from his own experience. They are true for Israel and, therefore, are true for him. But not only so. Because he has felt them as true for himself, therefore they are true for Israel. But if he says of Israel, 'Thou wilt not suffer thy loving one to see the pit,' he cannot feel his words to be true for himself as well as for Israel. As an individual he will see 'the pit' (i. e. the nether world), for he, like all men, is mortal. The best explanation will therefore be to assume that the Psalmist speaks both for himself and for all other pious Israelites, who together make up the true Israel. Indeed, the Hebrew text in the last line but four reads 'loving ones'—the plural, not the singular. It would not, I think, be inaccurate to say that the Psalmist was, as it were, trembling on the verge of a fuller faith. If the Psalm was written in the late Persian or early Greek period, various conceptions of a life after death, in one form or another, were making their appearance in Judæa. May we not suppose that at a moment when the Psalmist is filled with a sense of close communion with God, he forgets and ignores the approach of death, and conceives of his life with God as enduring for evermore? The Psalmist's joy in God was in truth one of the pathways whereby men climbed up to the conception of immortality. And it was the purest of all the pathways—if I may use so mingled a metaphor. For a belief in immortality is not the mere postulate of God's righteousness; it is not the supposed necessary reward of human merit; but it is the result and the corollary of communion with God. It is the conviction that the spirit which has found its source and home in God has also found a bond and a union which even death is powerless to sever. 'Spirit to spirit, ghost to ghost.'

The 'goodly heritage' is the Lord and the Lord's religion.

'My glory rejoiceth.' 'Heart' and 'glory' are synonyms; 'flesh' and 'soul,' strange though it may seem to us, are synonyms too, both being equivalent to 'life.'

§ 2. *The twenty-third Psalm*: '*The Lord is my shepherd.*'—The second Psalm (xxiii) in this group is the famous hymn, 'The Lord is my shepherd.' The Shepherd of Israel was a familiar appellation of God. 'The speaker,' says Professor Cheyne, 'is any pious Israelite in whose mind both national and personal hopes and fears rest side by side; the "national" and the "personal" elements cannot be dissevered by the most potent analysis. Israel's Shepherd does not neglect the individual. From Jeremiah's time onwards this truth was realized with increasing vividness; it has found its classic expression in this Psalm.'

The Lord is my shepherd;
I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
He leadeth me to waters of rest.
He refresheth my soul:
He guideth me on right paths for his name's sake
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil: for thou art with me;
Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:
Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and lovingkindness will follow me all the days of my life:
And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

The 'pastures' and 'waters of rest' keep up the metaphor of the flock and the shepherd. But what do they actually represent? The inward peace and security of those who are assured of God's protecting care. Even in calamity Israel will know no fear.

'He guideth me on right paths.' God leads Israel on paths which are sure and safe, and in the right direction. 'Right tracks as opposed to delusive tracks which lead nowhere.' The metaphor of the flock is still continued.

'For his name's sake.' The honour and trustworthiness of God are intimately bound up with the salvation of Israel. The idea was that God had made to Israel covenant promises to which he was bound to adhere. Though God of the whole world, he was emphatically and especially the God of Israel. Israel was the only people that knew him and worshipped him. Those who persecute Israel, laugh at and ridicule Israel's God.

'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death.' The Psalmist's faith and even his joy in God are available for dark days as well as bright ones. 'He holds fast to his confidence alike in prosperity and adversity.' The 'valley of the shadow of death' is a metaphor for a mortal peril. It keeps up the metaphor of the flock and the shepherd. It alludes to 'one of those narrow mountain glens so common in central Palestine, haunted by robbers and wild beasts, and dismal even at midday' (Cheyne).

'Thy rod and thy staff.' The shepherd's club. The conviction of God's loving protection is a comfort for Israel.

'Thou preparest a table.' A new metaphor. Israel is the guest; God is the host. Israel draws near to God and enjoys

spiritual communion with him. His foes may be near at hand, but Israel fears them not. The 'oil' and 'cup' are part of the feast.

'Goodness and lovingkindness:' perhaps we should rather render, 'welfare and grace.' Israel is assured that God will grant both outward prosperity and inward beatitude. The grace or favour comes from God, Israel will experience it.

'I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.' Is this also a metaphor for communion with God? Not quite, but nearly. The Psalmist was doubtless thinking of the actual Temple, where his highest moments of spiritual experience had been passed. But nobody 'dwelt' in the Temple without intermission. As in another Psalm of this group, the Temple has become the symbol of that close communion with God which was expressed and often realized by its services.

§ 3. *Older translations of the twenty-third Psalm.*—Few Psalms have been more widely used and loved than the twenty-third. As Professor Kirkpatrick says, it is 'unrivalled for calm serenity and perfect faith. Under Jehovah's loving care the Psalmist knows neither want nor fear. His words admit of the most universal application to all needs, temporal and spiritual, in every age.' The beauty and fame of the Psalm justify my dwelling upon it at some length, and it may be of interest to my readers to have before them some of the earlier English translations. Wycliffe's version was made not from the Hebrew but from the Vulgate, and, like the earlier rendering of Hampole, it is scarcely intelligible unless the Latin accompanies it. The clumsy Vulgate runs as follows:—

Dominus regit me et nihil mihi deerit. In loco pascuae ibi me collocavit; super aquam refectionis educavit me. Animam meam convertit; deduxit me super semitas justitiae propter nomen suum. Nam etsi ambulavero in medio umbrae mortis, non timebo mala, quoniam tu mecum es; virga tua et baculus tuus ipsa me consolata sunt. Parasti in conspectu meo mensam adversus eos qui tribulant me; impinguasti in oleo caput meum: et calix meus inebrians quam praeclarus est. Et misericordia tua subsequetur me omnibus diebus vitae meae, et ut inhabitem in domo Domini in longitudinem dierum.

Now shall follow Wycliffe's rendering as revised by Purvey (about 1388).

The Lord governeth me, and no thing shall fail to me; in the place of pasture there he hath set me. He nourished me on the water of refreshing; he converted my soul. He led me forth on the paths of righteousness, for his name. For why though I shall go in the midst of shadow of death, I shall not dread evils. for thou art with me.

Thy yerde (*rod*) and thy staff they have comforted me. Thou hast made ready a boord (*table*) in my sight against them that trouble me. Thou hast made fat mine head with oil, and my cup, filling greatly, is full clear. And thy mercy shall sue (*follow*) me in all the days of my life, and that I dwell in the house of the Lord into the length of days.

And now, leaping across the centuries, let us come to Coverdale. I quote from the version printed in the Great Bible of 1539.

The Lord is my shepherd, therefore can I lack nothing. He shall feed me in a green pasture, and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort. He shall convert my soul, and bring me forth in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me: thy rod and thy staff comfort me. Thou shalt prepare a table before me against them that trouble me: thou hast anointed my head with oil, and my cup shall be full. But (thy) lovingkindness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

The language of the Authorized Version is more nearly approached in the rendering of the *Geneva Bible* of 1560—a version which held its own in England for many years.

The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to rest in green pasture, and leadeth me by the still waters. He restoreth my soul, and leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I should walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me: thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou dost prepare a table before me in the sight of mine adversaries; thou dost anoint mine head with oil, and my cup runneth over. Doubtless kindness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall remain a long season in the house of the Lord.

The Bishops' Bible of 1568 was the translation of which the Authorized Version was to be the revision. But in this Psalm the Authorized Version is more like the Geneva rendering. But the Bishops' Bible has one or two good touches. 'Felicity' well expresses the meaning in the last sentence.

God is my shepherd, therefore I can lack nothing. He will cause me to repose myself in pastures full of grass, and he will lead me into calm waters. He will convert my soul; he will bring me forth into the paths of righteousness, for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff be the things that do comfort me. Thou wilt prepare a table before me in the presence of mine adversaries; thou hast anointed my head with oil, and my cup shall be brimful. Truly felicity and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of God for a long time.

Now finally here is the Authorized Version itself, from which (as will be seen) I have made few changes.

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; thou anointest my head with oil, my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

It may be added that the Revised Version of 1885 made only two slight changes in this Psalm, substituting 'guideth' for the second 'leadeth' (there are two different words in the Hebrew also), and 'hast anointed' for 'anointest.'

§ 4. *The twenty-third Psalm in Scotland.*—I cannot leave this twenty-third Psalm without saying a word of its place in the religious history of Scotland. Mr. Ker has said: 'Every line, every word of it, has been engraven for generations on Scottish hearts, has accompanied them from childhood to age, from their homes to all the seas and lands where they have wandered, and has been to a multitude no man can number, the rod and staff of which it speaks, to guide and guard them in dark valleys, and, at last, through the darkest.' To Scotsmen it is most familiar in the metrical version still used beyond the Tweed.

The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want.
He makes me down to lie
In pastures green; he leadeth me
The quiet waters by.
My soul he doth restore again,
And me to walk doth make
Within the paths of righteousness,
Ev'n for his own name's sake.

Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale,
Yet will I fear none ill:
For thou art with me; and thy rod
And staff me comfort still.
My table thou hast furnishèd
In presence of my foes;
My head thou dost with oil anoint,
And my cup overflows.

Goodness and mercy all my life
Shall surely follow me;
And in God's house for evermore
My dwelling-place shall be.

§ 5. *Psalm twenty-seven* (*a*): '*Dominus illuminatio mea.*'—My next Psalm in this group is the first part of Psalm xxvii, the present conclusion of which, set in so wholly different a key, we have already

heard. Note how closely the material Temple and the spiritual communion which that Temple has suggested and inspired are fused together. Let us hope that the modern synagogue suggests a similar fusion of the material and the spiritual to many a pious worshipper to-day.

The Lord is my light and my salvation;
Whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the fortress of my life;
Of whom shall I be afraid?
If the wicked come near to me to eat my flesh,
Even my enemies and my foes, they stumble and fall.
Though an host should encamp against me, my heart would not fear:
Though war should rise against me, still would I be confident.

One thing have I asked of the Lord, that do I seek.
To dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life,
To behold the graciousness of the Lord, and to contemplate his temple.
For in the time of trouble he hideth me in his booth:
In the covert of his tent he concealeth me;
He setteth me up upon a rock.
So shall mine head be lifted up above mine enemies round about me:
I will offer in his tent sacrifices of joy;
I will sing, yea, I will make melody unto the Lord.

The booth and the tent (in lines twelve and thirteen) are not to be taken literally. They are clearly metaphorical. The 'house' and the 'temple' are betwixt and between. It is in the Temple that the Psalmist, as Professor Cheyne says, 'has learned what communion with God means, and he feels towards the Temple as a child towards its mother.' But, like the author of the previous Psalm, what he desires is to be *always* in God's house, and this can hardly mean anything less than a desire to feel God always near him and about him, even as he has been conscious of his presence within the Temple. The opening words of this Psalm, in their Latin rendering, are the motto of the University of Oxford. God is the author of knowledge as well as the source of love: 'The Lord is my light,' 'Dominus illuminatio mea.'

§ 6. *The sixty-third Psalm.*—The next Psalm (lxiii) is again a wonderful instance of the purest spirituality suggested or

fostered by a local and material cause. The singer is far from the Temple wherein he had been wont to realize the magic of the divine communion. Here his thirst for God had from time to time been satisfied. Thus to dwell far from the Temple is to him as if he dwelt in a 'dry and thirsty land where no water is.' But as he thinks about God, whose lovingkindness he describes in a strange and striking phrase as 'better than life,' though the consciousness of it is the highest life, he becomes aware that whether he is near to or far from the Temple, he need never be far from God. Therefore he bursts forth into glad exultation as in the realized nearness to God he finds his highest satisfaction.

O God, thou art my God; earnestly do I seek thee:
  My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee
  In a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;
So have I longed for thee in the sanctuary,
  To behold thy power and thy glory.
For thy lovingkindness is better than life;
  My lips shall praise thee.
So will I bless thee while I live:
  I will lift up my hands in thy name.
My soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness;
  And my mouth praiseth thee with joyful lips.
I remember thee upon my bed,
  And meditate on thee in the night watches.
For thou hast been my help,
  And in the shadow of thy wings do I rejoice.
My soul clingeth fast unto thee:
  Thy right hand upholdeth me.

It is possible that the fourth to the ninth line should rather be rendered thus:—

As I saw Thee in the sanctuary,
  Beholding thy power and thy glory—
For thy lovingkindness is better than life,
  My lips do praise thee—
So will I bless thee while I live,
  I will lift up my hands to call on thy name.

§ 7. *The eighty-fourth Psalm: 'Quam dilecta.'*—The last Psalm in this group is the eighty-fourth. It is in many respects parallel to that Psalm of exile from Jerusalem to which we listened in Group I. As there (xlii) the Psalmist's soul panted after God, like the hart after the water-brooks, so here too his 'soul longs and

faints for the courts of the Lord.' But the former Psalm was a cry of sorrow; this seems to be a cry of joy.

It is the song of pilgrims who come up to pay their vows, or to join in the celebration of the high festivals, at the Temple of Jerusalem. It is a great pity that the text of this lovely Psalm should be so uncertain and defective.

How lovely are thy dwelling-places,
O Lord of hosts!
My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord:
My heart and my flesh cry aloud unto the living God.
Even the sparrow hath found an house,
And the swallow a nest for herself, where she layeth her young,
Even thine altars, O Lord of hosts,
My King and my God. (?)

Happy are they that dwell in thy house:
They will be still praising thee.
Happy is the man whose strength is in thee;

. . . . .

As they pass through the vale of Baca he maketh it full of fountains for them, (?)
The early rain covereth it with blessings. (?)
They go from strength to strength, (?)
And appear before God in Zion.

O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer:
Give ear, O God of Jacob.
Behold, O God, our shield,
And look upon the face of thine anointed.

For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand elsewhere,
I had rather lie at the threshold of the house of my God,
Than dwell in the tents of wickedness.
For the Lord God is a sun and shield:
The Lord will give grace and glory:
No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.
O Lord of hosts,
Happy is the man that trusteth in thee.

'Even the sparrow.' If the text is not incomplete, the meaning is, The Temple is so desirable a place that the very birds have

built their nests in the sanctuary. Some scholars for metrical and other reasons think that a few words have fallen out, and would render thus:—

Even the sparrow finds a house
And the swallow a nest,
Where she lays her callow brood,
[So have I found, even I,
A home] by thine altars,
O my king and my God.

(So Cheyne.)

The second stanza is very obscure. It seems to refer to the pilgrims' journey to Jerusalem. The 'vale of Baca' (*weeping*) is puzzling. It seems to be a particular place which the pilgrims pass through. To the casual passer-by it was arid and waterless, but being on the road to Jerusalem—the goal of desire—it was as if God had filled it with blessings and changed its very look.

'From strength to strength' is also doubtful. If the text and punctuation be correct, it must mean that 'fatigue is banished by the prospect' of Zion.

'Thine anointed.' Either the high priest, or more probably the whole people of Israel. The prayer, however, seems to come awkwardly between the second and fourth stanzas. Perhaps it has been inserted here by mistake. At any rate, the noble verse 'A day in thy courts' follows well after the stanza which brings the pilgrims to their goal at Zion.

Notwithstanding all these obscurities, how beautiful the Psalm is! How easily it adapts itself to our modern moods, so that we are able to give, if we will, a spiritual meaning to those courts and altars of God which the Psalmist praises so sweetly. And for this there are two reasons: first, our Psalm is a true lyric, 'occasional' in origin, and yet capable of wide application; and secondly, the Temple was no mere material building to the Psalmist, but rather a vehicle or stimulus for spiritual religion. Hence the spirit transforms the letter. His words grow plastic and pliable. We may put a meaning into them somewhat different from that intended by their author, and yet what they suggest to us is essentially the same as that which suggested them to him. He is to us a true spiritual ancestor.

§ 8. *Once more the 'I' of the Psalter.*—I may take this opportunity of saying a few more words on this question, for the idea that the Psalmist is often speaking not merely of or for himself but also for the community or the nation may seem to many readers to rob the Psalms of their religious value. But such a

supposition would be a grave mistake. The bearing of the communal 'I' may be perhaps most easily realized by substituting the plural for the singular. It would not destroy the religious value and truth of the twenty-third Psalm if, instead of reading 'The Lord is my shepherd,' we were to read, 'The Lord is our shepherd; we shall not want.' It would not impair the greatness and spirituality of the fifty-first Psalm if the words ran: 'Purge us with hyssop, and we shall be clean; wash us, and we shall be whiter than snow. Cast us not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy presence from us.' It would even bring out the full meaning of the twenty-second Psalm more clearly if it said: 'We will declare thy name unto our brethren; in the midst of the congregation we will praise thee.' Rarely if ever does a Psalmist, when he uses the 'first person singular,' say anything which is not true of himself as a unit of Israel, which is not the outcome of his own experience, which he has not realized in his own religious life. All or almost all that the communal or national 'I' means is that the sufferings, petitions, aspirations and joys recorded in the Psalter are those of Israel, and therefore of every Israelite whose heart beats in unison with the heart of his people. (The Israel may be the nation as a whole or the 'true Israel' within the nation, but for the present argument this makes no difference.) Just as Aristotle shows that logically and 'according to nature' the state is prior to the individual, so in the same sense is Israel prior to the Israelite, the community to the members which compose it. Each individual enters into the communal consciousness; he carries it on, and perhaps he strengthens and purifies it, but what he receives in almost every case is more than what he gives. The Israelite's religion was sustained and vitalized by his being a member of the community. He shared and experienced its joys and sorrows, its hopes and fears. It is these which are recorded in the Psalter, recorded by men who expanded, strengthened and purified the religion of their community, but at the same time stood in the closest relation to it, receiving from it their own religious sustenance and seeking to give vocal expression to it in their songs. I do not therefore believe that the national or communal interpretation of the 'I' (if properly understood) impairs the religious significance of the Psalter. Rather does it add to it a peculiar poetical and religious distinction. Here is the religion not so much of isolated men but of a community. The community is nothing outside its members; it does not exist without them or beyond them. The religion of a community is either the religion of its members or it is nothing at all—a dead letter, a series of written propositions, an echo of

the past. But the Psalter is instinct with vitality. It breathes and lives. Its religion was not made up to order: it was no laborious imitation of a pattern which no longer represented the real religious feelings and beliefs of its authors. The fusion between the individual and the community is complete and organic. The Psalmist does not merely speak in the name of his community: for the time being he *is* the community, and the community for the moment is summed up and expresses itself in him.

CHAPTER V

PSALMS OF THANKSGIVING

§ 1. *The Present and the Future.*—The Psalms which I bring together in this group under the title of Psalms of Thanksgiving are not all of one type. Some render thanks to God for actual deliverance; some, as in the first group, anticipate, and are songs of praise and gratitude for the deliverance which is yet to come. The Psalmists see the end at the beginning. For the deliverance they celebrate is always connected with the final deliverance of the Messianic or Golden Age. Any movement among the nations is sufficient to rouse their hopes and stir their expectations. Especially eager, as it would seem, were their anticipations during the conquering career of Alexander. No wonder that the immense and sudden changes which he wrought on the map and history of the world provoked their enthusiasm and excitement. Their hopes for the speedy coming of that Golden Age of righteousness, the age in which God should be king over all the earth, and every human soul should praise him, were doomed to disappointment; but some of the hymns to which those hopes gave birth are probably still preserved to us in the Psalter. And though the Psalmists were too confident in their expectations for the immediate future, they were no whit too confident in the goodness of God and in the triumph of righteousness. Sharing this faith with them, clinging to it with all our might and main, we can also appropriate their Psalms for our own use and comfort, and find in them the expression of our own highest hopes and aspirations. For the events of the moment which produced their hymns were transmuted by the Psalmists into forms and figures that are suitable for all time. They looked at the present, and utilized it for their poetry, *sub specie aeternitatis*, as the philosophers would say. Their words, though prompted by or even written for special circumstances, were in manner and

expression general enough to endure through the ages. Particular events were regarded in a universal light, and thus a poem for the occasion was capable of becoming a poem for eternity. The Psalmists, true poets as so many of them were, followed unconsciously the maxim of Rückert:—

'Nur wenn es Ewiges im Zeitlichen enthält,
Ist heut' es für das Fest und morgen für die Welt.'

§ 2. *The thirtieth Psalm*: '*Exaltabo te, Domine.*'—I include twenty-three Psalms in this group. Only two belong to the first collection, and these stand out sharply in tone and language from the rest. Of the twenty-one others, the majority fall into minor groups of their own, and are so found together in the Psalter. Thus we get the *three* successive Psalms xlvi to xlviii, the *six* Psalms xcv to c, and the *six* Psalms cxiii to cxviii.

Beginning with Psalm xxx, we find it difficult to decide whether it has an individual or a national signification. Is the deliverance personal to the singer, or is he the spokesman of his people? Probably the latter. The heading to the Psalm is very interesting: 'A song at the dedication of the house' (i. e. the Temple). It is tolerably certain that these words may be taken to mean that this Psalm was used at the re-dedication of the Temple by Judas Maccabeus. It still remains the Psalm for the festival of Chanukah. When it was written is doubtful. If it be a national Psalm, the distressful close of the Persian period may mark the troubles from which the career of Alexander the Great either brought or was expected to bring deliverance. There are frequent parallels in thought and language to many Psalms in the first group, which we have already heard. These the reader can find out for himself. The famous verse, 'For his anger is but for a moment,' is rendered in Coverdale's translation:—

For his wrath endureth but the twinkling of an eye,
And in his pleasure is life:
Heaviness may endure for a night,
But joy cometh in the morning.

The Hebrew word which I, borrowing from the Revised Version, have rendered 'tarry' means literally 'to lodge,' 'to pass the night as a traveller,' and thus beautifully expresses the central idea. Weeping is the passing guest, joy will come to stay.

I will extol thee, O Lord; for thou hast lifted me up,
And hast not made my foes to rejoice over me.
O Lord my God,
I cried unto thee, and thou hast healed me.

O Lord, thou hast brought up my soul from Sheol:
Thou hast kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit.
Sing unto the Lord, O ye his loving ones,
And give thanks to his holy name.
For his anger is but for a moment; his favour is for a lifetime:
Weeping may tarry for a night, but joy cometh in the morning.

As for me, in my prosperity I said,
'I shall never be moved.'
Lord, by thy favour thou hadst set me on strong mountains:
Then didst thou hide thy face, and I was troubled.
I cried to thee, O Lord;
And unto the Lord I made supplication:
'What profit is there in my blood, if I go down to the pit?
Can the dust praise thee? can it declare thy truth?
Hear, O Lord, and have mercy upon me:
Lord, be thou my helper.'

Thou hast turned for me my mourning into dancing:
Thou hast loosed my sackcloth, and girded me with joy;
To the end that my glory may sing praise to thee, and not be silent;
O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.

§ 3. *The fortieth Psalm.*—Psalm xl, or rather the first twelve verses of it (for a short prayer for deliverance from sore affliction seems to have been awkwardly appended to a hymn of thanksgiving), may belong to the same period as Psalm xxx. In its estimate of sacrifice it reminds us of the great fifty-first, and the no less great fiftieth Psalm, which we have yet to hear. The speaker is the true Israel, as represented by the *corps d'élite* of true believers.

I waited patiently for the Lord;
And he inclined unto me and heard my cry.
He brought me up out of the pit of destruction, out of the miry clay,
And set my feet upon a rock, and made firm my steps.

And he put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God,
That many might see it and fear, and put their trust in the Lord.

Happy is the man that maketh the Lord his trust,
And hath not inclined unto the proud, or such as turn aside to lies.
Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done,
And thy thoughts which are to us-ward:
None can be compared unto thee;
If I would declare and speak of them,
They are more than can be numbered.
Sacrifice and offering please thee not;
Burnt offering and sin offering thou hast not required.
Open ears hast thou made for me, (?)
In the roll of the book is my duty written.
I delight to do thy will, O my God:
Yea, thy law is within my heart.

I have declared the salvation of thy righteousness in the great congregation:
Lo, I do not restrain my lips,
O Lord, thou knowest.
I have not hid thy righteousness within my heart;
I have declared thy faithfulness and thy salvation:
I have not concealed thy lovingkindness and thy truth from the great congregation.
So do not thou restrain thy tender mercies from me, O Lord:
Let thy lovingkindness and thy truth continually preserve me.

The passage about the 'open ears' is very obscure. The line translated 'In the roll of the book is my duty written' (more literally, 'In the roll of the book it is prescribed to me') seems to come awkwardly after the declaration that God has not demanded sacrifices. For the 'book' can hardly be other than the Pentateuch; at least it must include the Pentateuch, and in that book 'sacrifices' are demanded. The Psalmist is in a different position from Jeremiah, who preceded him on the same lines (Part I, p. 408). Professor Wellhausen, while holding that the book is probably the Law, thinks we can get over the difficulty by

saying that 'we need not be surprised that it is by means of the Law that the present poet is led to understand God's preference of obedience to sacrifice. We find, in our books, the thoughts with which we are in sympathy; the rest we pass over. But the *book* here referred to probably included the Prophets as well as the Law.' I hardly think this explanation satisfactory. Perhaps, therefore, the distich containing the 'roll of the book' is a later addition. The 'law within the heart' could with equal accuracy be translated 'teaching.'

The 'great congregation' refers presumably to the people as a whole. The leaders or representatives of the nation explain and set forth to the community the meaning and import of the divine deliverance. Of the outward event they show the inner significance. The phraseology of the Psalm reminds us of the Second Isaiah; hence some think that the return from Babylon is the 'salvation' which the Psalmist 'declared.'

§ 4. *Psalms forty-six and forty-eight.*—We pass now to the songs of deliverance and thanksgiving contained in the second collection. Of these there are seven. The first three are Psalms xlvi, xlvii and xlviii, but the second of these is more akin to the first sub-group in the *third* collection, and will therefore be quoted later on. Psalm xlvi may perhaps have been written during the ferment produced in Israel at the overthrow of the Persian empire by Alexander the Great. All such great catastrophes were regarded by the Hebrews as divinely ordained, and as bearing a close relation to their own fortunes. Out of every such catastrophe they hoped the Messianic Age would arise. But our use and appreciation of the Psalm are not limited by the occasion of its origin. For us, as for the Jews of old, it is our highest hope to remember that above the intrigues and selfishness of international politics, as above the horrors of war, the divine purpose is still guiding and controlling the destinies of man.

Luther's famous hymn, *Ein' feste Burg ist unser Gott*, is founded upon this Psalm. Note that there are three stanzas with a probably recurrent refrain. At the end of the first and the beginning of the second stanza the text seems imperfect. The words in brackets are conjectural.

God is our refuge and stronghold,
A very present help in trouble.
Therefore we will not fear, though the earth be moved,
And though the mountains sink into the midst of the sea;
Though the waters thereof roar and foam,
Though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof.

[*The Lord of hosts is with us;*
The God of Jacob is our refuge.]

[His lovingkindness is] a river, the arms whereof make glad
The city of God, the sanctuary of the Most High.
God is in the midst of her; she will not be moved:
God helpeth her when the morning dawneth.
The nations raged, the kingdoms were moved:
He uttered his voice, the earth melted.
The Lord of hosts is with us;
The God of Jacob is our refuge.

Come, behold the works of the Lord,
What terrors he hath made in the earth.
He maketh wars to cease unto the end of the earth;
He breaketh the bow, and cutteth the spear in sunder;
He burneth the chariot in the fire.
'Give way, and know that I am God:
I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.'
The Lord of hosts is with us;
The God of Jacob is our refuge.

'When the morning dawneth': i.e. the morning of the Messianic Age.

Wonderful stories grew up about Alexander and the Jews. They were undoubtedly well treated by the great conqueror. Was Jerusalem spared unexpectedly? If so, the following Psalm (xlviii) may have been written to commemorate the event. The Psalmist recalls the days of Sennacherib: the kings (i.e. the Assyrian generals) drew near Jerusalem, but did not enter within its walls. And even such a deliverance as the Jews had 'heard' of in story, they had now 'seen' (i.e. experienced) with their own eyes. The Psalmist bids one and all rejoice in gratitude.

Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised
In the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness.
Fair in height, the joy of the whole earth,
Is mount Zion, the city of the great King:
God hath made himself known in her palaces as a refuge.
For, lo, the kings were assembled,
They came onward together.

They saw, they marvelled;
They were troubled, they hasted away.
Fear took hold upon them there,
And pain, as of one in travail.
Thou didst scatter them as the ships of Tarshish are broken by the east wind. (?)

As we have heard, so have we seen
In the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God:
God will establish it for ever.
We think of thy lovingkindness, O God,
In the midst of thy temple.
According to thy name, O God,
So is thy praise unto the ends of the earth:
Thy right hand is full of righteousness.

Let mount Zion rejoice,
Let the daughters of Judah be glad,
Because of thy judgements.
Walk about Zion, and go round about her:
Count the towers thereof.
Mark ye well her ramparts,
Visit her palaces;
That ye may declare to the next generation:
That this God is our God;
For ever and ever he will lead us.

§ 5. *The eighty-seventh Psalm: Zion, the Spiritual Mother.*—Near the two hymns about Jerusalem may be placed that great lyric of universalism which was quoted at the end of Part I (p. 608). It is Psalm lxxxvii, in one important respect the grandest in the whole Psalter. Proselytes had already begun to join the communion of Israel, and Jerusalem was becoming a spiritual metropolis as well as a political capital. The singer, inspired and enthusiastic through these yet small beginnings, looks forward to and realizes their consummation. The various nations (some old typical names are chosen, Rahab meaning Egypt) send up their sons for 'enrolment in the civic register of Zion.' But this enrolment means religious regeneration, and therefore the new citizens are, as it were, 'born again.'

The text of this strange and striking Psalm is unfortunately in more places than one obscure and uncertain. I have mainly adopted Professor Cheyne's translation in his commentary upon the Psalms (1888).

His foundation upon the holy mountains,
Yea, the gates of Zion the Lord loveth
More than all the dwellings of Jacob.
Glorious things are spoken of thee,
O city of God.
'Rahab and Babylon I proclaim my votaries;
Behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia—
This one was born there.'
And of Zion it shall be said,
'Each and every one is born in her;'
And he, the Most High, shall establish her.
The Lord shall reckon, when he writeth down the peoples,
'This one was born there.'
And they sing and dance,
All whose fountains are in thee.

The last two lines are especially doubtful. The Greek translators had a different text before them in the ninth and tenth lines, and in accordance with it one may render: 'And Zion each one calls Mother; yea, each one was born in her.' 'Mother Zion,' as the Greek text has it—a grand and significant phrase. And surely the conception of the spiritual motherhood of Jerusalem may inspire us still. That is the spiritual Zionism which we profess; the goal of Judaism, which should determine its development and influence its form.

In Professor Cheyne's latest book (*Jewish Religious Life after the Exile*, 1898) he gives a fresh translation of the Psalm, which probably brings out the meaning of the writer more clearly than any literal rendering of the present Hebrew text. He says of the Psalm: 'It is the eulogy of Zion as the metropolis of an ideally catholic church which we have before us. The Psalmist has absorbed all the great ideas of the Second Isaiah and the Songs of the Servant, and finds them becoming realized in his own happy experience. Whether by preaching, or simply by letting its light shine, the once despised Israel is now attracting Palestinians, Egyptians, Ethiopians, Babylonians, in such numbers that a day seems coming when all mankind will be Jews, i. e. when religion will unite more than the accidental differences of language or national character separate. The Second Isaiah seems to anticipate that foreigners will only be able to become Jews by sacrificing their national peculiarities. But our poet, and the author of the appendix to Isaiah xix (Part I, p. 605), clearly anticipate that Egypt and Babylon will remain

Egypt and Babylon, even when their higher life and their truest happiness are derived from Zion.' Therefore this Psalm prefigures with astonishing foresight the highest hopes of an enlightened Judaism to-day.

And now shall follow Professor Cheyne's new translation. He regards the Psalm as 'a poem in three stanzas of five lines each.'

Thou hast founded her on the holy mountains!
Jehovah loves the gates of Zion
More than all (other) dwellings of Jacob.
Gloriously will I praise thee,
Thou city of God!

Rahab and Babylon I will celebrate as her friends;
Behold, Philistia and Tyre,
With the people of Cush—each of these was born there.
Jehovah will note in the register of peoples,
This one (and that one) were born there.

And Zion each one calls Mother,
Yea, each one was born therein;
And (God) himself establishes her.
And (this anthem) will be sung in the congregations,
All my fountains are in thee.

§ 6. *Psalms sixty-six and sixty-seven.*—We now come to a pair of Thanksgiving Psalms of which the date is uncertain. The first is Psalm lxvi. Its author is not averse to sacrifices like the singer of Psalm xl, but his gratitude to God is no less deep and sincere. In the first part of the Psalm its national character and reference are clearly indicated by the plural pronoun; in the second part 'I' is used instead of 'we.' But the 'we' and the 'I' probably mean the same. Both are Israel. Note in the third stanza the appeal to the nations to join in Israel's thanksgiving. The consciousness that the one God should have more worshippers than a single people was dimly present to many an Israelite, but only very rarely did even the highest thinkers among them wholly free themselves from those religious limitations which a vivid sense of Israel's close relation to God had entailed.

Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye of the earth:
Make melody unto the glory of his name:
Sing forth the glory of his praise.

Say unto God, 'How terrible are thy works!
Through the greatness of thy power thine enemies submit themselves unto thee.
All the earth shall worship thee, and shall sing unto thee;
They shall sing to thy name.'

Come and see the works of God:
He is terrible in his doing toward the children of men.
He turned the sea into dry land:
They went through the flood on foot.
We will greatly rejoice in him,
Who ruleth by his power for ever.
His eyes behold the nations:
Let not the rebellious exalt themselves.

O bless our God, ye peoples,
And make the sound of his praise to be heard:
Who hath placed our soul in life,
And hath not suffered our feet to be moved.
For thou, O God, hast proved us:
Thou hast refined us, as silver is refined.
Thou broughtest us into the dungeon;
Thou laidest a heavy burden upon our loins.
Thou didst cause men to ride over our heads;
We went through fire and through water:
But thou broughtest us out into freedom.

I will go into thy house with burnt offerings:
I will pay thee my vows,
Which my lips have uttered,
And my mouth hath spoken, when I was in trouble.
I will offer unto thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings,
With the sweet savour of rams;
I will offer bullocks with goats.

Come and hear, all ye that fear God,
And I will declare what he hath done for my soul.
I cried unto him with my mouth,
And was exalted from under those who hate me.
If I had concealed iniquity in my heart,
The Lord would not have heard:
But verily God hath heard;
He hath attended to the voice of my prayer.

Blessed be God, who hath not turned away my prayer,
Nor his mercy from me.

The second of these two companion Psalms (lxvii) we have already heard in Part I (p. 545). It was suggested by a prosperous harvest, but this glad occasion led the singer on to pray for God's salvation in the widest sense of the word. Even as Israel is grateful to God the Giver and praises him, so may all nations of the earth join in this praise till it become world-wide and universal.

God be merciful unto us, and bless us,
And cause his face to shine upon us,
That thy way may be known upon earth,
Thy salvation among all nations.
Let the peoples praise thee, O God;
Let all the peoples praise thee.
O let the nations be glad and sing for joy.
That thou judgest the peoples righteously,
And leadest the nations upon earth.
Let the peoples praise thee, O God;
Let all the peoples praise thee.
The earth hath yielded her increase;
God, even our God, doth bless us.
God will bless us;
And all the ends of the earth will fear him.

§ 7. *The Accession Psalms: forty-seven and ninety-three.*—We now come to the so-called 'Accession' or 'Theocratic' Psalms, which bear a close family likeness to one another. Were they all written on the impulse of the same series of events? These events seemed to the Psalmists to wear a strange significance. Not far distant now was the great reign of God, when the claims of his divinity would be recognized throughout the world. What, then, were the events which form the background to, or rather the suggestions for, these notable Psalms? Full of reminiscences of the Second Isaiah and his school, they are ascribed by some authorities to the first generations of the return from Babylon, or more definitely still to the era which witnessed the completion of the second Temple. Others think of Alexander the Great.

There are eight of these Psalms in all, and six follow one another in the Psalter (xcv–c). The remaining two are xlvii and xciii. We will first listen to xlvii.

O clap your hands, all ye peoples;
  Shout unto God with the voice of triumph.
For the Lord Most High is terrible;
  He is a great King over all the earth.

He subdued peoples under us,
  And nations under our feet.
He chose our inheritance for us,
  The pride of Jacob whom he loved.

God is gone up with a shout,
  The Lord with the sound of a trumpet.
Sing praises to God, sing praises:
  Sing praises unto our King, sing praises.

For God is the King of all the earth:
  Sing ye praises with understanding.
God is become King over the nations:
  God hath seated himself upon his holy throne.

Princes of peoples are gathered together,
  With the people of the God of Abraham:
For the shields of the earth belong unto God:
  He is greatly exalted.

The second stanza refers to the distant past—Israel's original conquest of Canaan.

'God is gone up.' A religious anachronism; a phraseological relic. 'God is said to "come down" when he manifests his presence by active interposition in the affairs of the world. He is said to "go up" when, his work over, he as it were returns to heaven. The triumphal procession, carrying up (at least in ancient times) the Ark which was the symbol of God's presence to the Temple which was the symbol of heaven, and celebrating the victory which he had won for them with shouts and blowing of trumpets, was the outward and visible emblem of this "ascension," and suggests the form of the expression here' (Professor Kirkpatrick).

'Princes of peoples.' The completed process in a vision of the mind. The end is realized by faith. Two of the Greek Jews who translated the Hebrew Bible into their mother tongue render '*as* the people of the God of Abraham,' and our present Hebrew text implies the same. The meaning then would be that the princes and their peoples are now themselves become the people of the God

of Abraham—a pregnant universalistic phrase. But 'with' has probably dropped out.

Professor Wellhausen translates the last two lines of the Psalm thus: 'Men of their own free will from the peoples join the people of Abraham's God. For to God, our shield, belongs the world; he is exalted on high.' And he has the following important note, 'This verse is the key to the understanding of the Psalm. The conversions to Judaism, which became much more numerous after the days of Alexander the Great, gave rise to this lofty Messianic hope: they signalized the beginning of Jehovah's universal rule. The remarkable spread of Judaism among all the heathen at that time was undoubtedly a significant fact; it arose out of the Messianic hope, to which, in turn, it gave fresh vigour.'

The second Accession Psalm (xciii) is familiar to us from its place in our Sabbath liturgy. The streams and breakers are symbols of the nations, which dash vainly against the immutable purposes of God.

The Lord hath become King; he hath clothed himself with majesty;
The Lord hath clothed himself, hath girded himself with strength;
Now therefore is the world set firm, that it cannot be moved.
Thy throne is firm from of old,
Thou art from everlasting.

The streams have lifted up, O Lord,
The streams have lifted up their voice,
The streams lift up their roaring:
Mightier than the voices of many waters,
Mightier than the breakers of the sea, is the Lord on high.

Thy testimonies are very sure:
Holiness becometh thine house,
O Lord, for evermore.

§ 8. *The ninety-fifth Psalm: 'Venite, exultemus.'*—Either the next Psalm (xcv) is made up of two independent fragments, or some connecting-links have been lost. The first alternative seems the more probable, for the rebuke contained in the second part seems out of place in an Accession Psalm of thanksgiving and triumph. Moreover, the sudden change of speaker is exceedingly harsh.

O come, let us sing unto the Lord:
  Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.
Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving,
  And make a joyful noise unto him with psalms.
For the Lord is a great God,
  And a great King above all gods.

In his hand are the recesses of the earth:
  The summits of the hills are his also.
The sea is his, and he made it:
  And his hands formed the dry land.
O come, let us worship and bow down:
  Let us kneel before the Lord our maker.
For he is our God;
  And we are the people of his pasture,
  And the sheep of his hand.

. . . . . .

To-day, O that ye would hear my voice!
Harden not your heart, as at Meribah,
  And as in the day of Massah in the wilderness:
When your fathers tempted me,
  Tried me, though they saw my work.
Forty years long I abhorred this generation,
And said, 'They are a people with erring heart,
  And they know not my ways:'
So that I sware in my wrath
  That they should not enter into my rest.

The reference in the second fragment is to a story of the wanderings of the Israelites which was not transcribed in Part I. It occurs in Exodus xvii. 1–7, and runs as follows:—

'And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the Lord, and pitched in Rephidim: and there was no water for the people to drink. Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the Lord? And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst? And Moses cried unto the Lord, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me. And the Lord said unto Moses, Go on before the people, and take with

thee of the elders of Israel; and thy rod, wherewith thou smotest the Nile, take in thine hand, and go. Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the name of the place Massah (i. e. Temptation) and Meribah (i. e. Strife), because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the Lord, saying, Is the Lord among us, or not?'

§ 9. *Psalms ninety-six and ninety-seven.*—In the next Psalm (xcvi) the writer depicts the great judgement which is soon to follow Jehovah's assumption of universal kingship. From the days of Ezekiel and the Second Isaiah, the Judgement became an abiding feature of the Messianic Age. In later times it was associated with the resurrection of the dead, and the creation of a new heaven and a new earth. But now it may be said that the belief in it has faded away. We are far from thinking that the lot of the good and the bad are undiscriminated by God whether in life or death, nor is the conception of the Divine Being as king and judge either false or obsolete. But his rule and his judgements are conceived less outwardly, their methods are withdrawn from our eyes. We can no longer shape them in pictorial form, and even words are inadequate. 'Last judgements' find no place in our theology.

Note how the conversion of the nations is the chief element of the divine glory.

O sing unto the Lord a new song:
  Sing unto the Lord, all the earth.
Sing unto the Lord, bless his name;
  Tell the tidings of his salvation from day to day.
Declare his glory among the nations,
  His wonders among all peoples.

For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised:
  Awful is he above all gods.
For all the gods of the nations are things of nought:
  But the Lord made the heavens.
Splendour and majesty are before him:
  Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.

Give unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the peoples,
  Give unto the Lord glory and strength.

Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name:
Bring an offering, and come into his courts.
O worship the Lord in holy array:
Tremble before him, all the earth.
Say among the nations, 'The Lord hath become King:'
Now therefore the world is set firm that it cannot be moved:
He shall judge the peoples righteously.

Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad;
Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof.
Let the plain be joyful, and all that is therein:
Yea, let all the trees of the forest rejoice
Before the Lord, for he cometh,
He cometh to judge the earth:
He will judge the world with righteousness,
And the peoples with his faithfulness.

The description which Professor Cheyne gives of the next Psalm (xcvii) is the best summary of its contents. 'The same subject as before. [The first two stanzas] describe Jehovah's accession with the imagery proper to a theophany. [The last two stanzas] give the impressions which this great event must produce upon the Israelites and upon the idolaters respectively.'

The Lord hath become King; let the earth rejoice;
Let the multitude of isles be glad.
Clouds and darkness are round about him:
Righteousness and judgement are the foundation of his throne.
A fire goeth before him,
And burneth round about his steps.

His lightnings illumine the world:
The earth seeth, and trembleth.
The hills melt like wax at the presence of the Lord,
At the presence of the Lord of the whole earth.
The heavens declare his righteousness,
And all the peoples see his glory.

Confounded are all they that serve graven images,
That boast themselves of idols:
The gods bow down before him.

Zion heareth, and is glad;
And the daughters of Judah rejoice
Because of thy judgements, O Lord.
For thou, Lord, art high above all the earth:
Thou art exalted far above all gods.

The Lord loveth them that hate evil:
He preserveth the souls of his loving ones;
He delivereth them out of the hand of the wicked.
Light ariseth for the righteous,
And gladness for the upright in heart.
Rejoice in the Lord, ye righteous;
And give thanks unto his holy name.

§ 10. *Psalms ninety-eight and ninety-nine.*—Similar thoughts on the same subject are again presented to us in Psalm xcviii.

O sing unto the Lord a new song;
For he hath done marvellous things:
His right hand, and his holy arm, hath gotten him the victory.
The Lord hath made known his salvation:
His righteousness hath he revealed in the sight of the nations.
He hath remembered his lovingkindness unto Jacob, and his faithfulness toward the house of Israel:
All the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth:
Make a loud noise, and rejoice, and sing praise.
Sing unto the Lord with the harp;
With the harp and the sound of melody.
With trumpets and sound of cornet
Make a joyful noise before the Lord, the King.
Let the sea roar and the fulness thereof;
The world, and they that dwell therein.
Let the streams clap their hands:
Let the hills be joyful together
Before the Lord; for he cometh to judge the earth:
With righteousness shall he judge the world,
And the peoples with equity.

'Again' (in Psalm xcix) 'the Psalmist luxuriates in the thought of Jehovah's enthronization and in the prospect of the universal anthem to his name. Jehovah is the holy one, i.e. in this connexion the Infinite One; and from this large conception the Psalmist singles out the special feature of the divine righteousness for fuller treatment' (Cheyne).

The Lord hath become King: let the peoples tremble:
He is enthroned above the cherubim; let the earth be moved.
The Lord is great in Zion;
And he is high above all the peoples.
Let them praise thy great and terrible name:
Thou art a King that is holy.

He loveth judgement;
Thou hast established equity,
Thou hast executed judgement and righteousness in Jacob.
Exalt ye the Lord our God,
And worship at his footstool;
He is holy.

Moses and Aaron among his priests,
And Samuel among them that called upon his name;
They called upon the Lord, and he answered them.
He spake unto them in the cloudy pillar:
They kept his testimonies, and the ordinance that he gave them.
Thou answeredst them, O Lord our God:
Thou wast a God that forgavest them,
And wast appeased at their evil deeds.
Exalt ye the Lord our God,
And worship at his holy hill;
For the Lord our God is holy.

The pronouns in the third stanza are rather difficult. 'He spake unto *them* in the pillar of cloud'; presumably the Psalmist refers generally to the Mosaic age, as also in the next sentence. The words, 'And wast appeased at their evil deeds,' rest on an easy emendation of the text. As it stands, the Hebrew must be translated: 'And thou tookest vengeance on their evil deeds.' But in this connexion these words seem out of place. God's footstool is the Temple, or the holy mountain of Zion.

§ 11. *The hundredth Psalm:* '*Jubilate Deo.*'—The series of the Accession Psalms is fitly brought to a close in the following short and noble hymn of praise and thanksgiving (c):—

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands.
Serve the Lord with gladness:
Come before his presence with singing.
Know ye that the Lord he is God:
It is he that hath made us, and we are his,
His people, and the sheep of his pasture.
Enter into his gates with thanksgiving,
And into his courts with praise:
Give thanks unto him, and bless his name.
For the Lord is good; his lovingkindness is everlasting;
And his faithfulness endureth to all generations.

The Hebrew consonantal text of the fifth line would give the rendering: 'It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves,' and this is the translation of the Vulgate and of the Authorized Version. But it is an obvious mistake for the true reading which is recommended by the old Jewish editors of the consonantal text. It all depends on a single letter. 'Lo' spelt one way in Hebrew (לֹא) means 'not'; spelt another way (לוֹ) it means 'to him.' Thus we have either to read 'and not we,' or 'and to him we' (i.e. 'his are we').

Wycliffe's version runs thus:—

'All erthe, singe ye hertli to God; serve ye the Lord in gladnesse. Entre ye in his sight in ful out-ioiyng. Wite ye that the Lord hym silf is God; he made us, and not we maden us; his puple and the scheep of his lesewe (*pasture*). Entre ye in to hise yates in knouleching; entre ye into hise porchis; knouleche ye to him in ympnes (*hymns*). Herye (*praise*) ye his name, for the Lord is swete, his merci is with-outen ende; and his treuthe is in generacioun and in to generacioun.'

The famous Hundredth Psalm has been sung, as Dr. Ker says, 'in all lands for many centuries and in countless gatherings. In the Scottish Version, and with the accompaniment of Luther's melody, it has already girdled the earth.' This 'Scottish Version' was made by William Kethe, during his exile in Geneva with other Protestant divines during the reign of Mary. It forms part of the rhymed version of the Psalter edited and partly written by Sternhold and Hopkins, and published as a whole in 1564. It runs thus—

All people that on earth do dwell,
Sing to the Lord with cheerful voice:
Him serve with mirth, his praise forth tell,
Come ye before him and rejoice.

Know that the Lord is God indeed;
Without our aid he did us make;
We are his flock, he doth us feed,
And for his sheep he doth us take.

O enter then his gates with praise,
Approach with joy his courts unto;
Praise, laud and bless his name always,
For it is seemly so to do.

For why? the Lord our God is good;
His mercy is for ever sure;
His truth at all times firmly stood,
And shall from age to age endure.

§ 12. *The eighty-first Psalm: 'Exultate Deo.'*—I now interrupt the sequence in order to insert a Psalm of joyful thanksgiving (lxxxi) which, like the ninety-fifth, seems made up of two originally distinct passages. Moreover, the second half of this eighty-first Psalm is curiously parallel to the second half of the ninety-fifth Psalm.

The first of the two passages is a glad summons to the celebration of the festival of Passover or Tabernacles. Because of the mention of the Trumpet (Shophar) it has, however, now become the Psalm read or sung on the Day of Memorial. In the second passage a Psalmist is apparently recording words which he had heard in a vision or a dream. Whether the hypothesis of two separate fragments be true or not, in either case something is wanting before the words, 'I heard the speech of one I knew not.'

Sing aloud unto God our strength:
Make a joyful noise unto the God of Jacob.
Make melody, and strike the timbrel,
The pleasant lyre with the harp.
Blow the trumpet on the new moon,
At the full moon, for the day of our festival.
For this is a statute for Israel,
And a law of the God of Jacob.
This he ordained in Joseph for a testimony,
When he went forth from the land of Egypt.

. . . . . .

I heard the speech of one I knew not:
'I removed his shoulder from the burden:
His hands were delivered from the basket.
Thou calledst in trouble, and I delivered thee;
I answered thee in the secret place of thunder:
I proved thee at the waters of Meribah.

(I said), "Hear, O my people: I will warn thee,
O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto me;
Let there be no strange god within thee;
Neither worship thou any strange god.
I am the Lord thy God,
Who brought thee out of the land of Egypt:
Open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it."

'But my people would not hearken to my voice;
And Israel would none of me.
So I gave them up to the stubbornness of their own hearts,
That they might walk in their own counsels.
Oh that my people would hearken unto me,
And Israel would walk in my ways!
I would soon subdue their enemies,
And turn my hand against their adversaries.
They that hate them would submit themselves unto them;
And their time would endure for ever. (?)
I would feed thee with the fat of wheat:
And with honeycomb would I satisfy thee.'

§ 13. *The Hallel: Psalms one hundred and thirteen, and one hundred and fourteen.*—We now come to the six famous Psalms (cxiii–cxviii) which form the so-called *Hallel*. They are, as every Jew knows or should know, recited (wholly or in part) in the synagogue on the three great festivals of Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles, and also on the New Moons and on the Feast of Dedication. This custom is undoubtedly very ancient, and was certainly in vogue before the Christian era. It is highly probable that the Psalms were first used at the Feast of Dedication, and then afterwards at the Pentateuchal festivals. But more than this. It is probable that four of the six were written in the very midst of the Maccabean uprising, and that the last was composed for the very event which ever after it has helped to commemorate so worthily. The first two of the six may have been composed at an earlier date.

Praise ye the Lord.
Praise, O ye servants of the Lord,
Praise ye the name of the Lord.
Blessed be the name of the Lord
From this time forth and for evermore.
From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same
The Lord's name is to be praised.

The Lord is high above all nations,
  And his glory above the heavens.
Who is like unto the Lord our God,
  Who dwelleth on high,
Who looketh down so low
  Upon the heaven and the earth?

Who raiseth up the poor out of the dust,
  And lifteth the needy out of the dunghill;
That he may set him with princes,
  Even with the princes of his people.
Who maketh the barren woman to keep house,
  As the joyful mother of children.
  Praise ye the Lord.

The 'poor' and 'needy' generally refer to the pious community or to some section of the Jewish people. But the following lines are difficult: 'That he may set him with princes, even with the princes of his people.' Some would emend the text, and read 'even with princes his (i.e. God's) people,' or 'even with the princes of peoples.' In that case the allusion might be to the return from Babylon and to the anticipations connected with it. The 'barren woman' would be Israel, which takes its place again among the nations and will become great and populous. Compare the metaphor in the Second Isaiah (Part I, p. 499). But if the text be correct, it would seem that the date of the Psalm must be Maccabean, and the only feasible explanation that of Wellhausen, whose pithy note runs: 'The Maccabean champions were received among the nobility and blended with them.'

In the following Psalm (cxiv) the poet looks back to the exodus from Egypt. The celebration of God's mighty deeds to Israel in the past is a prelude to the thanksgiving for more recent mercies.

The close of this Psalm seems sudden. Perhaps something is lost. By the imperatives in the last stanza the singer gives his own answer to the rhetorical question which he had put to the waters and the hills.

When Israel went out of Egypt,
  The house of Jacob from a people of strange language;
Judah became his sanctuary,
  And Israel his dominion.

The sea saw, and fled:
  Jordan turned back.

The mountains skipped like rams,
And the hills like lambs.

What aileth thee, O thou sea, that thou fleest?
Thou Jordan, that thou turnest back?
Ye mountains, that ye skip like rams;
And ye hills, like lambs?

Tremble, thou earth, at the presence of the Lord,
At the presence of the God of Jacob;
Who turneth the rock into a pool of water,
The flint into a springing well.

§ 14. *Psalm one hundred and fifteen: 'Non nobis, Domine.'*— Our next Psalm (cxv) is certainly Maccabean, but its *precise* date is hard to fix. Was it written after a victory, but before the final triumph? It begins beseechingly as if amid affliction, but a more confident and happy tone soon succeeds.

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us,
But unto thy name give glory,
For the sake of thy lovingkindness and thy truth.
Wherefore should the nations say,
'Where, pray, is their God?'
But our God is in the heavens:
He doeth whatsoever he pleaseth.

Their idols are silver and gold,
The work of men's hands.
They have mouths, but they speak not:
Eyes have they, but they see not:
They have ears, but they hear not:
Noses have they, but they smell not:
They have hands, but they handle not:
Feet have they, but they walk not:
Neither speak they through their throat.
They that make them shall be like unto them;
Every one that trusteth in them.

O Israel, trust thou in the Lord:—
He is their help and their shield.
O house of Aaron, trust in the Lord:—
He is their help and their shield.

Ye that fear the Lord, trust in the Lord:—
  He is their help and their shield.
The Lord hath been mindful of us: he will bless us;
  He will bless the house of Israel;
  He will bless the house of Aaron.
He will bless them that fear the Lord,
  Both small and great.

May the Lord increase you more and more,
  You and your children.
Blessed may ye be of the Lord
  Who made heaven and earth.
The heavens are heavens for the Lord
  But the earth hath he given to the children of men.
And we will bless the Lord
  From this time forth and for evermore.
  Praise ye the Lord.

The *third* person following on the imperative in the third stanza seems to be explicable upon the supposition that half the choir sang the summons, and the other half made the rejoinder. Note the triple division of the people. The priests are important, but scarcely less so are the proselytes. For they are those 'that fear the Lord.'

§ 15. *Psalm one hundred and sixteen.*—The situation out of which the following Psalm (cxvi) was written is very obscure, though it probably belongs to the same Maccabean period. Some scholars regard it (in Professor Cheyne's words) as the 'tender musings of a devout soul on some personal or rather national deliverance.' In that case it is a Psalm of thanksgiving. But others believe that it is a prayer in sore affliction, and that it is only the confidence produced by prayer which views the danger as overpast. The nature of Hebrew tenses makes this uncertainty possible; moreover, in several places the text is probably corrupt, and in others defective. The Psalmist speaks as one of his party, the *Chasidim* or *Asidaioi*, of whom we shall hear in the next section. 'The son of thy handmaid' is to be explained as in Psalm lxxxvi (p. 468). The pious community of the present is the descendant of the pious community of the past.

I love the Lord, because he hearkeneth
  Unto the voice of my supplications;
Because he inclined his ear unto me
  On the day when I called.

The cords of death had compassed me,
And the pangs of Sheol gat hold upon me,
I found trouble and sorrow:
Then I called upon the name of the Lord:
'O Lord, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.'
Gracious is the Lord, and righteous;
Yea, our God is merciful.
The Lord preserveth the simple:
I was brought low, and he helped me.

Return unto thy rest, O my soul;
For the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee.
For thou hast delivered my soul from death,
Mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling.
I shall walk before the Lord
In the land of the living.

I kept my trust, even when I spake:
'I am greatly afflicted:' (?)
I said in mine alarm:
'All men are liars.' (?)
What shall I render unto the Lord
For all his benefits towards me?
I will raise the cup of salvation,
And call upon the name of the Lord.
Precious in the sight of the Lord
Is the death of his loving ones.
O Lord, truly I am thy servant;
I am thy servant, the son of thine handmaid:—
Thou hast loosed my bonds.
I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving,
And will call upon the name of the Lord.
I will pay my vows unto the Lord,
Even in the presence of all his people,
In the courts of the Lord's house,
In the midst of thee, O Jerusalem.
Praise ye the Lord.

'The simple.' The word is here used in a good sense. The simple are they who put their trust wholly in God, and despite of appearances are confident of ultimate deliverance. It is the simplicity of faith.

'Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his loving

ones.' A difficult verse. What is the meaning of the word 'precious'? Some suppose the signification to be: 'God does not give his loving ones over unto death willingly;' their death is a serious, a grave thing in his sight. (The root idea of the word '*yakar*' is *heavy*.) Others believe the passage means: God regards the death of his loving ones 'as something dearly to be paid for by those who are its agents.' (So Cheyne.) Much of the third stanza is very obscure, and the translation dark and doubtful. Probably the text is corrupt. The passage from 'Precious in' down to 'loosed my bonds' seems defective. Olshausen and Wellhausen conjecture that the original text may have run like this:—

Precious in the sight of the Lord
  [Is the life of his servants;
  He giveth not] his loving ones unto death.
[I said]: O Lord, [help me], for I am thy servant:
  I am thy servant, the son of thy handmaid.
[Then didst thou hearken unto me,]
  Thou didst loose my bonds.

§ 16. *The one hundred and seventeenth Psalm.*—The tiny Psalm which follows is the shortest in the Psalter.

O praise the Lord, all ye nations:
  Praise him, all ye peoples.
For his lovingkindness hath been mighty over us:
  And the faithfulness of the Lord endureth for ever.
  Praise ye the Lord.

For our one word 'praise' the Hebrew here has two. So in German you can say 'rühmen' and 'loben,' or 'loben' and 'preisen'; but 'laud' as a synonym for 'praise' is ugly.

'Over us,' i. e. protectingly.

The Hebrew word *Émet* is usually rendered 'truth' in the Authorized Version, but familiar as we are with the term, it is often a not very accurate translation. It means more properly 'fidelity' or 'faithfulness,' truth as realized in the fulfilment of a bond or covenant. God's *Émet* towards Israel is his fidelity to his covenant.

§ 17. *The last of the Hallels: Psalm one hundred and eighteen.*—The last of the Hallel Psalms is cxviii. Scarcely any other in the whole Psalter is so surely Maccabean as this. It breathes the very spirit of Judas, the hero, even as it celebrates his dedication of the purified Temple: that is the 'Day which the Lord hath made,' and Israel is the 'corner-stone.' Professor Cheyne describes

the structure of the Psalm as follows: 'A procession is on its way to the Temple, different sections of which alternately sing the several verses of the first part.' (Stanzas 1 to 4.) The first half of the fifth stanza 'is spoken in the name of the whole band on its arrival at the gates'; the second half 'is the reply in the name of the Levites who receive it.' The sixth stanza is 'sung antiphonally as before.' The first verse of the last stanza 'is the cry of the whole chorus'; the second verse 'is spoken by those within to the approaching procession'; the third 'belongs to the leaders of the band'; the fourth 'to a part of the chorus'; the fifth 'to the whole body of worshippers.'

The procession on its way to the Temple.

O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good:
For his lovingkindness endureth for ever.
Let Israel now say,
That his lovingkindness endureth for ever.
Let the house of Aaron now say,
That his lovingkindness endureth for ever.
Let them that fear the Lord now say,
That his lovingkindness endureth for ever.

Out of my straits I called upon the Lord:
The Lord answered me with enlargement.
The Lord is on my side; I will not fear:
What can man do unto me?
The Lord is for me as my Helper;
Therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me.
It is better to take refuge in the Lord
Than to trust in man.
It is better to take refuge in the Lord
Than to trust in princes.

All nations compassed me about:
But in the name of the Lord I have cut them off.
They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about:
But in the name of the Lord I have cut them off.
They compassed me about like bees;
They burned as a fire of thorns:
In the name of the Lord I have cut them off.

Thou didst thrust sore at me that I might fall:
But the Lord helped me.

The Lord is my strength and my song,
And he hath become my salvation.
The sound of rejoicing and deliverance is in the tents of the righteous:
'The right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly,
The right hand of the Lord is exalted:
The right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly.'
I shall not die, but live,
And declare the works of the Lord.
The Lord hath chastened me sore:
But he hath not given me over unto death.

The procession at the gates of the Temple.

Open to me the gates of righteousness:
I will enter into them and give thanks unto the Lord.

Levites within the Temple.

This is the gate of the Lord,
Into which the righteous may enter.

The procession.

I will give thanks unto thee: for thou didst hear me,
And thou hast become my salvation.
The stone which the builders despised
Is become the head stone of the corner
This is the Lord's doing;
It is marvellous in our eyes
This is the day which the Lord hath made;
We will rejoice and be glad in it.

The whole chorus.

Save now, we beseech thee, O Lord:
O Lord, we beseech thee, send now prosperity.

Levites within the Temple.

Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord:
We bless you from the house of the Lord.

Leaders of the procession.

The Lord is God; he hath given us light:
Bind ye garlands with myrtles unto the horns of the altar. (?)

Part of the chorus.

Thou art my God, and I will give thanks unto thee:
My God, I will exalt thee.

The whole chorus.

O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good:
For his lovingkindness endureth for ever.

'The gates of righteousness,' i. e. (1) 'the gates which open only to the righteous, and (2) those from which Jehovah's righteous acts of deliverance proceed' (Cheyne).

The despised stone is either Zion or Israel. 'In consequence of the Maccabean victories, the despised Jewish people now assume a prominent position in the world' (Wellhausen).

'Bind ye garlands with myrtles:' a very doubtful rendering due to Professor Graetz. The usual translation is, 'Fasten the festal victim with cords to the horns of the altar,' which is both absurd and un-Hebraic. Perhaps the text is corrupt.

The Midrash on the Psalms has a pretty little homily on the 'Gate of the Lord.' 'In the world to come a man is asked, "What was thine occupation?" If he reply, "I fed the hungry," he is answered, "*That* is the gate of the Lord: enter thou in."'

§ 18. *The one hundred and thirty-eighth Psalm.*—My thanksgiving group is concluded by a probably Maccabean Psalm (cxxxviii), in which the writer expresses his gratitude for the divine deliverance of Israel, and his faith in the complete realization of the prophetic word.

I will praise thee with my whole heart:
Before kings will I sing praise unto thee.
I will worship toward thy holy temple,
And praise thy name for thy lovingkindness and for thy truth:
For thou hast done great things above all thy word.
In the day when I cried thou answeredst me,
And madest me bold in my soul with thy strength.

All the kings of the earth shall praise thee, O Lord,
When they hear the words of thy mouth.
Yea, they shall sing of the ways of the Lord:
For great is the glory of the Lord.

The Lord is high, yet he beholdeth the lowly:
And the proud he knoweth afar off.
Though I walk in the midst of trouble, thou wilt revive me:
Thou wilt stretch forth thine hand against the wrath of mine enemies,
And thy right hand shall save me.
The Lord will perfect that which concerneth me
Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth for ever:
Forsake not the works of thine hands.

Israel is bold through God-given strength. He is both proud and humble. Proud towards his foes and persecutors, for he is fearless unto death; humble towards God, for even his courage is not his own.

CHAPTER VI

PSALMS OF PILGRIMAGE

§ 1. *The Songs of Ascents.*—Three groups of Psalms have passed before us. Prayers in Affliction; Peaceful Communings with God; Songs of Thanksgiving. There shall now follow a group marked out and distinguished in the Psalter itself by a special title or heading. In the Authorized Version the Psalms of this group are called Songs of Degrees; in the Revised Version they are called Songs of Ascents. The Hebrew word is '*Ma'aloth*,' which may also be rendered '(songs of) goings up,' or '(songs of) the pilgrimages.' The meaning of the term is obscure, but the majority of scholars regard these songs as having been composed for pilgrims who came up for worship and prayer to the Temple at Jerusalem. Professor Robertson-Smith, for instance, writes: 'According to the Mishnah and other Jewish traditions, these Psalms were sung by the Levites, at the Feast of Tabernacles, on the fifteen steps or degrees that led from the women's to the men's court of the Temple. But when we read the Psalms themselves, we see that originally they must have been sung not by Levites but by the laymen who came up to Jerusalem at the great feasts; and the word which Jewish tradition renders by "degree" or "step" ought rather to be translated "going up" to Jerusalem, so that the Songs of Degrees ought rather to be called "Pilgrimage Songs." But now the curious thing is that, according to the laws of Hebrew grammar, the title prefixed to each of these hymns must be translated not "a song of pilgrimage," but "the songs of pilgrimage." In other words, each title is properly the collective title of the whole fifteen Psalms, which must once have formed a separate hymnal for the use of pilgrims; and when the collection was taken into the greater Psalter, this general title was set at the head of each of the hymns.' On the other hand, as Professor Wellhausen observes, many of the hymns seem to have nothing

to do with pilgrimages, and to be unsuitable for such occasions. 'The meaning of the expression (*Songs of Ascents*) cannot be regarded as finally determined.'

It did not seem right to separate the songs of this historic hymnal, so I have kept them together, and shall quote them (omitting only one) in the order in which we find them. I place them as my fourth group, because if one were to separate them, they could be distributed between the three previous groups, five of them falling to group one, five to group two, and four to group three. Their date is uncertain, but they probably belong to the late Persian and early Greek periods.

§ 2. *The one hundred and twentieth Psalm.*—The first pilgrimage song (cxx) depicts the community of Israel as suffering from hostile neighbours, but these 'neighbours' are not necessarily foreigners. Many may have been Israelites. But 'the key to the special circumstances is lost' (Cheyne).

In my distress I cried unto the Lord,
  And he heard me.
Deliver my soul, O Lord, from lying lips,
  From the deceitful tongue.
What shall he give unto thee,
  And what shall he add unto thee, thou deceitful tongue? (?)
Sharpened arrows of a warrior,
  With coals of broom. (?)
Woe is me, that I sojourn in Meshech,
  That I dwell beside the tents of Kedar!
My soul hath too long dwelt
  With him that hateth peace.
I am for peace, but when I speak
  They are for war. (?)

A little Psalm full of obscurities.

'What shall he give unto thee?' The translation is disputed. Apparently the meaning is that God is asked to requite the 'deceitful tongue' in its own coin. The tongue of the wicked is sharp as the arrow and works ruin like fire. May the arrow and the fire destroy it! As to 'coals of broom,' Professor Cheyne says that 'the Bedawins of Sinai still burn this very plant into a charcoal which throws out the most intense heat.' *Meshech* (i.e. tribes between the Black and the Caspian Sea) and *Kedar* (i.e. nomad tribes of North Arabia) perhaps 'symbolize the malignant neighbours of the Jews at home.'

§ 3. *Psalm one hundred and twenty-one : 'Levavi oculos meos in montes.'*—The second song (cxxi) can be its own interpreter. This famous religious lyric speaks to every heart. The 'hills' are those of Jerusalem, above which 'the Lord dwelleth.' They are 'the boundaries of the horizon, the limit beyond which the eye cannot pierce.' A belief in the hurtful influence of the moon under certain conditions was widely spread throughout antiquity. A similar fancy still prevails in many places. The sun hurts the body; the moon the mind.

I lift up mine eyes unto the hills:
  Whence cometh my help?
My help cometh from the Lord,
  Who made heaven and earth.

He will not suffer thy foot to be moved:
  He that keepeth thee will not slumber.
Behold, he that keepeth Israel
  Doth neither slumber nor sleep.

The Lord is thy keeper:
  The Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.
The sun shall not smite thee by day,
  Nor the moon by night.

The Lord will keep thee from all evil:
  He will keep thy soul.
The Lord will keep thy going out and thy coming in
  From this time forth, and even for evermore.

I will give here, so that we may dwell a little longer on this lovely Psalm, the translation of it by Richard Rolle of Hampole. I quote from Mr. Bramley's edition. Rolle died in 1349.

I liftid myn eghyn in hillis, whethen help cum till me. My help of the Lord, that made heven and erth. Gif he noght in styrynge thi fote, na slomyre he that kepis the. Lo he sall noght slomyre na he sall slepe, that kepis Israel. The Lord the kepis, the Lord thi hilynge on thi right hand. Be day the sunn sall noght bren the, na the mone be nyght. Lord kepis the fra all ill, Lord kepe thi saule. Lord kepe thin ingange and thin outgange, fra this now and in till warld.

Rolle's version is a word-for-word rendering of the Vulgate, and hardly less so is Wycliffe's.

I reiside myn ighen to the hillis, fro whannus help schal come to me. Myn help is of the Lord, that made hevene and erthe. The Lord gyve

not thi foot in to moving, nether he nappe that kepith thee. Lo, he schal not nappe, nether slepe, that kepith Israel. The Lord kepith thee; the Lord is thi proteccioun above thi right hond. The sunne schal not brenne thee bi dai, nether the moone bi nyght. The Lord kepe thee fro al yvel; the Lord kepe thi soul. The Lord kepe thi goyng in and thi goyng out, fro this tyme now and into the world.

Perhaps one of the most successful of the innumerable verse paraphrases of this Psalm is that recently published in the *Jewish Year*.

Unto the hills I lift mine eyes,
Whence comes my help, my help that lies
In God, enthroned above the skies,
  Who made the heavens and earth to be.

He guides thy foot o'er mountain steeps,
He slumbers not, thy soul who keeps,
Behold he slumbers not, nor sleeps,
  Of Israel the guardian he.

He is thy rock, thy shield and stay,
On thy right hand a shade alway,
The sun ne'er smiteth thee by day,
  The moon at night ne'er troubles thee.

The Lord will guard thy soul from sin,
Thy life from harm without, within,
Thy going out and coming in,
  From this time forth eternally.

§ 4. *Psalm one hundred and twenty-two.*—In the next song (cxxii) the singer either represents himself as just entering the city, or he recalls the pilgrimage which is just over. In the second alternative the third line should be rendered, 'Our feet stood.' The Hebrew will bear either translation.

The meaning of the words 'which art built up as a city that is well compact together' (Cheyne's translation) is extremely doubtful. Professor Cheyne thinks it refers to the compactness of the city itself, shut in by its ravines and ramparts. According to Wellhausen it implies that 'Jerusalem must have been destroyed not long before. The opposite to a *compact* city would be a city *inhabited as an open country, a town without walls.*'

The second stanza is an historic reminiscence. The 'thrones' are tribunals. 'Either the Davidic kings are referred to or princes of the royal house. The latter shared the judicial function with the king' (Cheyne). But other scholars translate the verbs by the present tense, and suppose that the 'tribes of the Lord are the Jews outside Jerusalem, scattered about Palestine or elsewhere in the dispersion.' The thrones of judgement would then be the Sanhedrin, the supreme court of justice.

I was glad when they said unto me,
'Let us go unto the house of the Lord.'
Our feet do stand
Within thy gates, O Jerusalem;
Jerusalem which art built up as a city
That is well compact together.

Thither the tribes went up,
Even the tribes of the Lord,
According to the ordinance for Israel,
To give thanks unto the name of the Lord.
For there were set thrones of judgement,
The thrones of the house of David.

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
May they prosper that love thee.
Peace be within thy walls,
And prosperity within thy towers.
For my brethren and companions' sakes,
I would wish thee peace.
Because of the house of the Lord our God
I would seek thy good.

§ 5. *Psalm one hundred and twenty-three: 'Ad te levavi oculos meos.'*—In the next Psalm the situation seems the same as in cxx.

Unto thee I lift up mine eyes,
O thou that dwellest in the heavens.
Behold, as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters,
And as the eyes of a maiden unto the hand of her mistress;
So our eyes wait upon the Lord our God,
Until that he have mercy upon us.
Have mercy upon us, O Lord, have mercy upon us:
For we are exceedingly filled with contempt.
Our soul is exceedingly filled
With the mocking of those that are at ease,
And with the contempt of the proud.

'The contempt of the proud' is the scorn which the proud feel for the singers. In the later Jewish liturgy the conception of God as a Master is often combined with the conception of him as a Father. Thus in the service for the New Year it is said:

'This is the birthday of the world; thereon God brings all his creatures to judgement. We stand before thee as children or as servants: if as children, be thou merciful to us as a father hath pity upon his children; if as servants, our eyes are fixed on thee until thou art gracious unto us and bringest our judgement to the light.'

§ 6. *Psalm one hundred and twenty-four: 'Nisi quia Dominus.'*—The particular occasion which is celebrated in the following song (cxxiv) is now unknown. Professor Wellhausen supposes that 'the era of freedom,' here commemorated, 'is that of the Maccabees.'

If it had not been the Lord who was on our side,—
  Now may Israel say;—
If it had not been the Lord who was on our side,
  When men rose up against us:
Then they had swallowed us up alive,
  When their wrath was kindled against us:
Then the waters had overwhelmed us,
  The torrent had gone over our soul:
Then the proud waters
  Had gone over our soul.

Blessed be the Lord,
  Who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth.
Our soul is escaped as a bird out of the snare of the fowlers:
  The snare is broken, and we are escaped.
Our help is in the name of the Lord,
  Who made heaven and earth.

It is well worth while to read the spirited metrical version of this Psalm written by John Wedderburn on the basis of a German rendering by Hans Sachs.

Except the Lord with us had stand,
  Say furth, Israell, unfengheitlie,
Had not the Lord bene our warrand,
  Quhen men rais in our contrarie,
Thay had us all on live devorit,
With ire sa scharplie thay us schorit,
  Sa kendlit was thair crueltie.

For lyke the welterand wallis brym,
  Thay had o'erquhelmit us with mycht,
Like burnis that in spait fast rin,
  Thay had o'erthrawin us with slycht.
The bulrand stremis of thair pryde
Had peirsit us throw bak and syde,
  And reft fra us our lyfe full rycht.

But loving to the Lord, allone,
That gaif us nocht to be thair pray,
To be rent with thair teeth anone,
Bot hes us fred full well thame fray,
Lyke to ane bird taine in ane net,
The quhilk the foular for her set,
Sa is our lyfe weill win away.

The net is brokin in pecis small,
And we ar savit fra thair schame,
Our hope was ay, and ever sall
Be in the Lord, and in his name,
The quhilk has creät hevin sa hie,
And maid the eird sa mervellouslie,
And all the ferleis of the same.

(*Schorit*, threatened; *wallis*, waves; *brym*, fierce; *burnis*, streams; *spait*, flood; *bulrand*, roaring; *loving*, praise; *anone*, at once; *fray*, from; *ferleis*, wonders.)

§ 7. *The one hundred and twenty-fifth Psalm.*—Foreign domination and continued misfortune have made many Israelites abandon their faith or careless in its practice. The Psalmist trusts that these causes of ungodliness will not long endure.

They that trust in the Lord
Shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.
As the mountains are round about Jerusalem,
So the Lord is round about his people
From henceforth even for ever.
For the sceptre of wickedness shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous,
Lest they put forth their hands unto iniquity.
Do good, O Lord, unto those that are good,
And to them that are upright in their hearts.
As for such as turn aside unto their crooked ways,
The Lord shall cast them away with the workers of iniquity.
(*Peace be upon Israel.*)

The 'lot of the righteous' is the land of Israel.

'Do good, O Lord,' &c. This has been the prayer of the honest religious partisan of all ages and creeds. His enemies are ever described as those who 'turn aside unto their crooked ways.' But even for the truly evil as for the truly good, God surely works on a higher principle than the crudities of tit-for-tat. The wicked would be a greater puzzle to faith than the suffering good, if we had to believe that any of them would be utterly

cast away. The life after death seems more needful for the regeneration of the wicked than for the reward of the good.

§ 8. *Psalm one hundred and twenty-six.*—In the beautiful little song which follows (cxxvi), the singer seems to contrast the exquisite joy and the rapturous expectations which the return from Babylon produced with the depression and wretchedness under which he actually lived. We must not assume too hastily that the writer had himself witnessed the return. The community is one throughout its generations. The Psalmist is still confident that the good time will surely come. Present fidelity may have to sow its seed in tears, but those who now sow in sorrow, or their descendants, shall reap the results of that fidelity amid joy. Such seems to be the thought.

It is said that this Psalm was a favourite with the noble band of religious Englishmen who struggled for the emancipation of the slaves in the colonies of the Empire and for the abolition of the slave trade. 'Sir Thomas Fowell Buxton quoted the second verse ("Then was our mouth filled with laughter") when he heard that the slaves were freed and the work accomplished' (Mason: *The Psalms at work*).

When the Lord turned the fortunes of Zion,
We were like them that dream.
Then was our mouth filled with laughter,
And our tongue with singing:
Then said they among the nations,
'The Lord hath done great things for them.'
The Lord had done great things for us;
We were glad.

Turn our fortunes, O Lord,
As the streams in the south land.
They that sow in tears
Shall reap in joy.
He that goeth forth weeping, as he scattereth his seed,
Shall come home rejoicing, bearing his sheaves.

'The dry watercourses in the parched south land are filled with rushing torrents by the autumn rains.'

'Bearing his sheaves.' But it is not necessarily implied that the *same* Israelites who are faithful amid sorrow *now* shall *also* reap the reward of joy. The sowers may be one generation; the reapers another.

Note that the phrase 'turn the fortunes' is also and more usually translated 'bring back the captivity.' But although there may have doubtless been many involuntary Jewish exiles when the Psalmist wrote, the petition, 'bring back the captivity,' at the beginning of stanza two would sound strangely after the statement of stanza one that such a bringing back had already been accomplished. Or is a new 'captivity' referred to, the exiles deported by Artaxerxes Ochus?

§ 9. *Psalm one hundred and twenty-seven: 'Nisi Dominus aedificaverit domum.'*—In the following Psalm (cxxvii) the connexion between its two halves is hard to trace.

For the first half seems to say that the blessing of God must be the guard and guarantee of human toil; the second praises the active help which children can give. The first part seems to say, Vain is human effort without God's stamp of approval; the second points out the most effective instrument which has been granted by God through which a man can maintain his place and assert his rights. Hence Baethgen supposes that we have here two separate little lyrics accidentally joined together. The addition of the second part may perhaps be accounted for by its relation to the Psalm of the following paragraph:—

Except the Lord build the house,
They labour in vain that build it:
Except the Lord keep the city,
The watchman waketh but in vain.
It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit down late,
To eat the bread of travail:
Even so he giveth his beloved in sleep.

Lo, sons are an heritage of the Lord:
And children are his reward.
As arrows are in the hand of a mighty man:
So are children of youth.
Happy is the man
That hath his quiver full of them:
They shall not be ashamed,
When they speak with enemies in the gate.

A German Proverb runs, *An Gottes Segen ist Alles gelegen*, and the first part of the Psalm is an extension of the Proverb. But many different *nuances* of thought can be elicited from it, and it might be hard to say what was the precise meaning

intended by the Psalmist. Is he speaking against the needless fret and worry which spoil the lives of many workers? Or would he insist that the proud confidence in our own strength, without a thought of God the Inspirer, will end in failure? Would he urge that they who love God and whose love is returned will gain blessings, they know not how? And indeed it is a notable fact in the lives of truly religious persons that they will tell you in all sincerity of the many blessings which God has undeservedly and unexpectedly conferred upon them, when perhaps in many outward respects their lives are difficult and hard. 'The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him.'

The Hebrew of the last line of the first part of the Psalm is very obscure; hence it is all the more difficult to determine the thought precisely. The Authorized Version has, 'For so he giveth his beloved sleep,' and it is this rendering which prompted the lovely poem of our greatest English poetess, Mrs. Browning. I wish I had space to quote more than the opening verse.

> 'Of all the thoughts of God that are
> Borne inward unto souls afar,
> Along the Psalmists' music deep,
> Now tell me if that any is
> For gift or grace surpassing this,
> "He giveth his beloved sleep."'

But this rendering would be unsuitable to the context, and so the line is usually translated: 'Even so he giveth his beloved in sleep,' i.e. the results which you hardly achieve with ceaseless toil and anxious but trustless heart, God gives to his beloved even while they sleep. But Wellhausen's curt note reminds us how uncertain this rendering is. '*Even so giveth he to his beloved in sleep* is the traditional, but quite inadmissible, translation of the last line. The Hebrew words are unintelligible.'

'They shall not be ashamed.' The father is emboldened to resist injustice and enmity by the support of his sons. They are not disconcerted before the judges; they win their suit, and are not disappointed and put to shame.

'The gate,' i.e. the broad space before the gates where the judges sat. 'The man who has a number of stalwart sons to support him will not be exposed there to the danger of an unjust conviction' (Driver).

§ 10. *Psalm one hundred and twenty-eight.*—'Domestic happiness is generally left to the proverb-writers; our Psalmist (cxxviii), however, seizes upon the neglected theme, side by side with which observe his deep love for Zion' (Cheyne).

Happy is every one that feareth the Lord;
That walketh in his ways.
For thou shalt eat the labour of thine hands:
Happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee.
Thy wife shall be as a fruitful vine in the recesses of thine house:
Thy children like olive plants round about thy table.
Behold, thus shall the man be blessed
That feareth the Lord.

May the Lord bless thee out of Zion:
Mayest thou see the welfare of Jerusalem
All the days of thy life;
Yea, mayest thou see thy children's children.
(*Peace be upon Israel.*)

§ 11. *Psalm one hundred and twenty-nine: 'Saepe expugnaverunt.'*—A short national hymn of thanksgiving (cxxix). Israel is first compared to a furrowed field, then to a driven ox. The precise meaning of the metaphor in the third stanza is a little doubtful on account of an uncertainty as to one of the Hebrew words ('unsheathed'). 'In March the village housetops in Palestine are bright green with grass which soon withers when the latter rains are over' (Cheyne). But withers before what? If 'unsheathed' be right, it would mean: before the grass shoots up in blossom.

'Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth,'
Let Israel now say:
'Many a time have they afflicted me from my youth:
Yet they have not prevailed against me.
The ploughers ploughed upon my back:
They made long their furrows.
The Lord is righteous:
He hath cut asunder the cords of the wicked.'

Let them all be confounded and turned back
That hate Zion.
Let them be as the grass upon the housetops,
Which withereth before it is unsheathed;
Wherewith the mower filleth not his hand;
Nor he that bindeth sheaves his bosom.

Neither do they which go by say,
'The blessing of the Lord be upon you:
We bless you in the name of the Lord.'

It is still true: 'Many a time have they afflicted me, yet have they not prevailed against me.' Israel, the witness of God, still remains, a marvel to many, a puzzle to some, to accomplish in God's good time the work which God has given him to do.

§ 12. *The one hundred and thirtieth Psalm: 'De profundis clamavi.'*—A national Psalm in sore affliction (cxxx) follows upon the hymn of thanksgiving. One of the most famous of all the Psalms. 'To how many hearts this Psalm has brought comfort and hope, God only can tell' (Dr. Ker).

Out of the depths have I cried unto thee, O Lord.
Lord, hear my voice:
Let thine ears be attentive
To the voice of my supplications.
If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities,
O Lord, who could stand?
But there is forgiveness with thee,
That thou mayest be feared.

I wait for the Lord, my soul doth wait,
And in his word do I hope.
My soul waiteth for the Lord
More than the watchmen for the morning:
Yea, more than the watchmen for the morning.

Let Israel hope in the Lord:
For with the Lord there is lovingkindness,
And with him is plenteous redemption.
And he shall redeem Israel
From all his iniquities.

'There is forgiveness with thee.' If God were merciless in his relations to man, what man would care to worship such a pitiless Deity? But for man's sake and for his own glory God desires man to worship him; he desires that there should be such a thing as religion. He forgives that he may be feared. The word 'feared' is here used as a synonym for religion. God does not forgive in order that man may be in terror of him. That would be nonsense. But God would neither be worth reverence, nor

would it be worth while to revere him, unless he were forgiving. 'Not worth reverence,' because he would not be good; 'not worth while to revere,' because, as sin is for us inevitable, it would be hopeless to serve him. Who would not run away from and disown an unforgiving Father?

'Watchmen.' As the tired watchmen in the city yearn for the break of day, so Israel yearns for God to put an end to the long night of suffering which seems eternal.

§ 13. *The one hundred and thirty-first Psalm.*—A fascinating lyric of resignation and hope.

Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty
Neither do I exercise myself in great matters or in things too high for me.
Surely I have stilled and quieted my soul,
As a weaned child with his mother:
My soul within me is even as a weaned child.
Let Israel hope in the Lord
From henceforth and for ever.

We seem perhaps to understand this Psalm more completely than we actually do. What are those great matters or things too high (literally 'things too wonderful') with which the Psalmist does not concern himself? They are probably anxious problems and questions about the date and advent of the Messianic age, the continued rule of the foreigner, the prosperity of the lax and the indifferent, the sufferings of the righteous and the faithful. These puzzling perplexities the Psalmist leaves to the care and disposal of God, in whom he has brought himself to trust; in him he rests as quietly as a child in the arms of its mother.

We should be inclined to contrast the humble resignation of the Psalmist with a condition of anxious fretting and of worrying doubt. But the Psalmist seems to contrast it with pride. 'The heavens are the heavens of the Lord': to seek to fathom the meaning of problems to whose solution God alone can hold the key, to trouble oneself over the seeming non-fulfilment of divine promises—all this is to show not merely a lack of faith, but actual presumption. It is an overstepping of the human limit. Our Psalmist would not perhaps have sympathized with the mental wrestlings of Job. Profound humility is not, however, an impossible ally of the deepest philosophical investigation. But that happy peace and blissful contentment in God attained by the Psalmist still remain as an ideal for us all. Nor must we omit to notice the force of the image which he has chosen. The weaned

child is satisfied by the mere presence and nearness of its mother. So the Psalmist in his thought of God is not storm-tossed and agitated by a desire for earthly prosperities, for the punishment of his enemies, for the visible solution of life's perplexities; God himself is enough for him. In him he finds his rest. He does not cry to him for satisfaction. God *is* his satisfaction. In communion with Him he is at peace. The peace of God is no sleepy stupor or thoughtless ease: it is the peace which (for almost all who know it) lies on the *other side* of striving; noble deeds and holy living are both its presupposition and its fruit.

§ 14. *Psalms one hundred and thirty-three and one hundred and thirty-four.*—Of the two last pilgrimage songs the first (cxxxiii) celebrates the union of all classes and conditions of Israelites in common worship at Jerusalem. 'In the solemn feast which has brought them together to Zion, the scattered brethren of one faith enjoy the privilege of being near one another.' The two figures under which this 'pleasant' union is described are not quite easy. Does the first mean that the goodliness of the sight is as the goodliness of the sacred oil, or rather that the unbroken lines of the pilgrims are like the continuous flow of the oil? What is the dew of distant Hermon which flows down on Mount Zion? Does it mean dew as rich as that which falls on Hermon, and is the point of the comparison the reviving quality of the dew? The pilgrims gain fresh strength from their common worship even as the dew, goodly as Hermon's, which falls on Zion refreshes the herbage.

Professor Robertson-Smith, whose interpretation of the first two lines of the Psalm is quoted and adopted above, holds that the rest of it describes 'the scene under a figure. The long lines of the houses of Jerusalem, and the tents of the pilgrims, flow down the slopes of the Temple-hill even to the base, like the oil on Aaron's garments—a blessed sight. Nay, this gathering of all the piety of Israel is as if the fertilizing dews of great Hermon were all concentrated on the little hill of Zion.'

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is
That brethren should dwell together!
It is like the fine oil upon the head
That floweth down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard:
That floweth down to the skirts of his garments:
As the dew of Hermon, that floweth down upon the mountains of Zion:
For there the Lord hath appointed the blessing,
Even life for evermore.

The last song (cxxxiv) seems to be 'an interchange of greetings between the lay worshippers in the Temple and the priests and Levites appointed for the night service' (Cheyne). The first two sentences give the summons; the third is the priestly response.

Behold, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord,
Who by night stand in the house of the Lord.
Lift up your hands unto the sanctuary,
And bless the Lord.

'The Lord bless thee out of Zion,
He the maker of heaven and earth.'

CHAPTER VII

THE ROYAL PSALMS

§ 1. *The eighteenth Psalm: 'Diligam te, Domine.'*—In this chapter I bring together ten Psalms which, unlike in many respects, yet agree in this: that they either allude to, or are spoken by a ruler, a reigning prince, a king. Who this king may be is in each case a very difficult question to decide, and hence the 'royal' Psalms are among those which have given rise to the longest discussions and about which the most various theories have been suggested by the learned. It will obviously not be possible for me to refer to these discussions and theories except in the most cursory and summary manner.

The first Psalm to be cited in this group is the eighteenth. It bears the following heading: 'Of David, the servant of the Lord, who spake unto the Lord the words of this song on the day that the Lord delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul.' This Psalm has been retained for David even by scholars who cannot see their way to admitting his claim to any other portion of the existing Psalter. But there is no good reason to make this exception, and the true bearing of the Psalm is veiled if we adhere to it. The Psalm is purely general, and the author of the heading was not unconscious of this, as we may gather from his curious phrase, 'on the day that the Lord delivered him from *all* his enemies.' There is, as Professor Wellhausen points out, 'a total absence of *definite* historical allusions.' The person of David is assumed by the poet, but it is in reality the community or the nation whose hopes and ideals are thus expressed. And these hopes and ideals are those with which we are already familiar. They are dependent upon the prophetic teaching; for this particular Psalm Mr. Gray has rightly called attention to a passage in the Second Isaiah (Part I, p. 500. 'I will make an everlasting covenant with

you, even the sure mercies of David. Behold, for a witness to the peoples I appointed him, a ruler and commander of the nations. Behold, thou shalt call a people that thou knowest not, and a people that know not thee shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Israel, for he hath glorified thee').

The Psalm is therefore Messianic. It depicts dramatically and by the anticipation of faith the scenes of the final deliverance and its results. The king is either the royal nation itself which enters upon the heritage of David, or it is the future king of Davidic lineage who is to rule over a redeemed and regenerate people. Mr. Gray adopts the first supposition; Professor Cheyne the second. The latter scholar says, 'From the very first the Psalmist transports us to the Messianic age. The judgement on the nations has taken place; Israel, with a Davidic king at its head, has been raised to the height of prosperity. It is this Davidic king who speaks in the Psalm. He has no private ambitions, and can therefore interpret the thoughts of the community; indeed, the Psalmist sometimes forgets the king, and speaks for the personified people.'

This Psalm, with another not included in our present Psalter, has also been inserted in the Second Book of Samuel, breaking the connexion between two historical passages. I have quoted the Psalm almost in full in Part I, and made some comments upon its teaching (pp. 264–269).

I love thee, O Lord, my strength.
The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer;
  My God, my rock, in whom I take refuge;
  My shield, the horn of my salvation and my stronghold.
I call upon the Lord, who is worthy to be praised:
  So am I saved from mine enemies.
The billows of death compassed me,
  And the floods of destruction made me afraid.
The nooses of Sheol compassed me about:
  The snares of death confronted me.
In my distress I called upon the Lord,
  And cried unto my God:
He heard my voice out of his temple,
  And my cry came before him, even into his ears.

Then the earth shook and trembled;
  The foundations also of the hills moved
  And were shaken, because he was wroth.

There went up a smoke out of his nostrils,
And fire out of his mouth devoured:
Coals were kindled by it.
He bowed the heavens and came down:
And darkness was under his feet.
And he rode upon a cherub, and did fly:
Yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind.
He made darkness his secret place, his pavilion round about him;
Dark waters, thick clouds of the skies.
At the brightness that was before him thick clouds vanished;—
Hail stones and coals of fire!
The Lord thundered in the heavens,
And the Highest gave his voice.
Yea, he sent out his arrows, and scattered them;
And he shot out lightnings, and discomfited them.
Then the beds of the waters were seen,
And the foundations of the world were discovered,
At thy rebuke, O Lord,
At the blast of the breath of thy nostrils.
He stretched out from on high, he took me,
He drew me out of many waters.
He delivered me from my strong enemy,
And from them which hated me: for they were too strong for me.
They confronted me in the day of my calamity:
But the Lord was my stay.
He brought me forth into a large place;
He delivered me, because he delighted in me.
The Lord dealt with me according to my righteousness;
According to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.
For I kept the ways of the Lord,
And departed not wickedly from my God.
For all his ordinances were before me,
And I did not put away his statutes from me.
I was blameless before him,
And I kept myself from iniquity.
Therefore the Lord recompensed me according to my righteousness,
According to the cleanness of my hands in his eyesight.

With the loving thou shewest thyself loving;
With the upright thou shewest thyself upright;
With the pure thou shewest thyself pure;
And with the tortuous thou wilt shew thyself crooked.
For thou savest the humble people;
But high looks thou dost abase.
For thou lightest my lamp:
The Lord my God enlighteneth my darkness.
For by thee I run through a troop;
And by my God I leap over the wall.

As for God, his way is perfect:
The word of the Lord is pure:
He is a shield to all those that take refuge in him.
For who is God save the Lord?
Or who is a rock save our God?
The God that girdeth me with strength,
And maketh my way perfect.
He maketh my feet like hinds' feet,
And setteth me upon my high places.
He teacheth my hands to war,
So that a bow of brass is bent by mine arms.
Thou givest me the shield of thy salvation:
Thy right hand holdeth me up,
And thine help maketh me great.
Thou enlargest my steps under me,
That my feet do not slip.
I pursue mine enemies, and overtake them:
Neither turn I again till they are consumed.
I shatter them that they are not able to rise:
They are fallen under my feet.
For thou girdest me with strength unto the battle:
Thou subduest under me those that rise up against me.
Thou hast given me the necks of mine enemies;
That I may destroy them that hate me.
They cry, but there is none to save:
Even unto the Lord, but he answereth them not.
And I beat them small as the dust before the wind:
I cast them out as the dirt in the streets.
Thou deliverest me from the strivings of the peoples;
Thou makest me a head of nations:
A people whom I have not known serve me.

As soon as they hear of me, they obey me:
Foreigners submit themselves unto me.
The foreigners fade away, (?)
And come trembling out of their fastnesses.

The Lord liveth; and blessed be my rock;
And let the God of my salvation be exalted.
Even the God that avengeth me,
And subdueth the peoples under me.
He delivereth me from mine enemies:
Yea, thou liftest me up above those that rise up against me:
Thou deliverest me from the violent man.
Therefore will I give thanks unto thee, O Lord, among the nations,
And sing praises unto thy name.
Great deliverance giveth he to his king;
He sheweth lovingkindness to his anointed,
To David, and to his seed for evermore.

'The billows of death.' 'The onslaught of the Psalmist's foes is compared to rising waters which threatened to overwhelm him; but Jehovah, in answer to his call, descended from heaven in a thunderstorm, and rescued him from their grasp' (Driver).

'The Lord dealt with me according to my righteousness.' The king is forgotten: it is the community which speaks, and moreover the community of the Messianic age which, partly by its own effort and partly by the grace of God, has shown itself worthy of the divine favour.

'With the loving thou shewest thyself loving.' I have made some comments upon this passage in Part I. In one sense the Psalmist's words are true. The laws of God are laws which in the long run make for righteousness. Wickedness in the long run is thwarted by them and turned aside. But in another sense the Psalmist's words are, we pray and believe, inadequate and even inaccurate. God is always the same. To none does he show himself 'crooked.' It is only man who changes. We may say that a man destitute of righteousness could form no conception of a righteous God, but the Divine Being, as Plato too has said, is in himself changeless for ever. And who would care to love God if he did not love us all? What son would love his father if he thought that his father only cared for him when he was good? And far more righteous and far more impartial and unwearying in his love than the most righteous and loving of human fathers is our Father who is in heaven. He is not unless he is perfect.

But one of my critics thinks that I have misapprehended the meaning of the Psalmist. In her opinion all that the Psalmist meant was 'that those persons who pursue tortuous paths will be pursued in those paths by God and stopped in their designs.' Sin in the long run fails and suffers shipwreck; righteousness 'succeeds.'

'To David, and to his seed for evermore.' This is that 'Messianic article of the Jewish creed which was held fast when faith and facts presented but slight correspondence with each other. The entire Psalm appears to have been composed for the purpose of strengthening the Messianic hope that the ideal image of David would be seen at last by his people' (Wellhausen).

§ 2. *The eighty-ninth Psalm.*—The second of these 'royal' Psalms is the eighty-ninth. Here the Psalmist contrasts the promises made to the Davidic house by Nathan the prophet (Part I, p. 238) with the mournful present. He wrote in the darker days of the Persian period or during the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes. The king to whom he refers is in one place the individual Messianic king of the future, but in another the royal people of Israel itself, who, as in the eighty-fourth Psalm, are described as the 'Lord's anointed.' The confusion is not difficult to explain. The 'king' was regarded as the representative, the *Inbegriff*, as the Germans say, of the people, while the people—far nearer and more important to the Psalmist than the monarch of the future—occupy the place of the king.

I will sing of the lovingkindness of the Lord for ever:
With my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations.
For I have said, 'Lovingkindness shall be built up for ever:
Thy faithfulness wilt thou establish in the very heavens.'
Thou hast made a covenant with thy chosen,
Thou hast sworn unto David thy servant:
'Thy seed will I establish for ever,
And build up thy throne to all generations.'

The heavens shall praise thy wonders, O Lord:
Thy faithfulness in the congregation of the holy ones.
For who in the heaven can be compared unto the Lord?
Who among the sons of the mighty can be likened unto the Lord?
God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the holy ones,
And terrible above all them that are about him.

O Lord God of hosts, who is a strong Lord like unto thee?
And thy faithfulness is round about thee.
Thou rulest the raging of the sea:
When the waves thereof arise, thou stillest them.
Thou hast broken Rahab in pieces, as one that is slain;
Thou hast scattered thine enemies with thy strong arm.
The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine:
The world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them.
The north and the south, thou hast created them:
Tabor and Hermon rejoice in thy name.
Thou hast a mighty arm:
Strong is thy hand, and high is thy right hand.
Righteousness and justice are the foundation of thy throne:
Lovingkindness and truth go before thy face.
Happy is the people that know the festal shout:
They walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance.
In thy name they rejoice all the day:
And in thy righteousness they are exalted.
For thou art the glory of their strength:
And in thy favour our horn is exalted.
For our shield belongeth unto the Lord;
And our king to the Holy One of Israel.

Then thou spakest in vision to thy loving one,
And saidst, 'I have laid help upon one that is mighty;
I have exalted one chosen out of the people.
I have found David my servant;
With my holy oil have I anointed him:
With whom my hand shall be established:
Mine arm also shall strengthen him.
The enemy shall not overreach him;
Nor the son of wickedness afflict him.
And I will beat down his foes before his face,
And smite them that hate him.
My faithfulness and my lovingkindness shall be with him:
And in my name shall his horn be exalted.
I will set his hand also in the sea,
And his right hand in the rivers.
He shall cry unto me, "Thou art my father,
My God, and the rock of my salvation."
Also I will make him my firstborn,
Higher than the kings of the earth.

My lovingkindness will I keep for him for evermore,
And my covenant shall stand fast with him.
His seed also will I make to endure for ever,
And his throne as the days of heaven.
If his children forsake my law,
And walk not in my judgements;
If they break my statutes,
And keep not my commandments;
Then will I visit their transgression with the rod,
And their iniquity with stripes.
Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him,
Nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.
My covenant will I not break,
Nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.
Once have I sworn by my holiness,
Surely I will not be false unto David:
"His seed shall endure for ever,
And his throne as the sun before me.
It shall be established for ever as the moon,
And the witness in heaven is faithful." ' (?)

But thou hast cast off and abhorred,
Thou hast been wroth with thine anointed.
Thou hast spurned the covenant of thy servant:
Thou hast profaned his crown even to the ground.
Thou hast broken down all his hedges;
Thou hast brought his strong holds to ruin.
All that pass by the way spoil him:
He is a reproach to his neighbours.
Thou hast exalted the right hand of his adversaries;
Thou hast made all his enemies to rejoice.
Thou hast turned back the edge of his sword,
And hast not made him to stand in the battle.
Thou hast made his glory to cease,
And cast his throne down to the ground.
The days of his youth hast thou shortened:
Thou hast covered him with shame.

How long, Lord? wilt thou hide thyself for ever?
How long will thy wrath burn like fire?
Remember how short my time is:
For what vanity thou hast created all the children of men!

What man is he that liveth, and will not see death,
Who will deliver his soul from the hand of Sheol?
Lord, where are thy former lovingkindnesses,
Which thou swarest unto David in thy truth?
Remember, Lord, the reproach of thy servants;
How I bear in my bosom the shame of many peoples;
Wherewith thine enemies have reproached, O Lord;
Wherewith they have reproached the footsteps of thine anointed.

Blessed be the Lord for evermore. Amen, and Amen.

'For I have said, Lovingkindness shall be built up for ever.' If the text be correct, we must explain with Wellhausen: 'In spite of all, I hold fast to my belief in God's fidelity.'

'The holy ones' and the 'sons of the mighty' are the angels.

'The festal shout.' 'The shout with which many religious festivities were celebrated' (Driver).

'Thy loving one,' i.e. David. The Hebrew text reads 'loving ones,' which might mean that the Psalmist regarded the prophecy for all intents and purposes as addressed to the nation.

'Thine anointed': in view of what follows, the 'anointed' is clearly the people of Israel. But the 'king' at the end of the third stanza must be explained to refer to the ideal or Messianic king, the hoped-for descendant of David. It may however be that Wellhausen is right in translating this verse like the Authorized Version: 'For the Lord is our shield; and the holy one of Israel is our king.'

The Psalm ends somewhat abruptly. Perhaps the real end has been lost. The words in italics are the doxology closing the third book and the second collection of the Psalms.

§ 3. *Psalms twenty and twenty-one.*—We now hark back to the first collection and halt at Psalms xx and xxi. Here the king appears to be actually existent. Who is he? Some scholars think that these Psalms must be pre-exilic, and suppose the king to be Hezekiah or Josiah. But there is nothing else in the Psalm to specially favour a pre-exilic date, and phraseological parallels would rather point in the contrary direction. Some have thought of Simon the Maccabee. Captain and high priest of the Jews as he was, an enthusiastic Psalmist might conceivably call him 'king.' Others, again, have supposed that the 'anointed one' is the High Priest, who is called 'king' by an inaccuracy which is rather verbal than real. For in the post-exilic period the High Priest

was the chief official or magistrate of the community. According to another hypothesis the 'king' may be the people, succeeding to the place formerly occupied by the Davidic line. And lastly, Professor Cheyne now holds that the king is the Messiah, 'who is supposed to be on the throne. In Psalm xx he is represented as just starting to fight with the enemies of Israel. It is perhaps his first campaign, for in Psalm xxi the church-nation, in praising God for the king's victory, represents the total destruction of the enemies as still future.' Between all these conflicting hypotheses I will not attempt to decide.

The Lord answer thee in the day of trouble;
The name of the God of Jacob set thee up on high;
Send thee help from the sanctuary,
And support thee out of Zion;
Remember all thy meal offerings,
And accept thy burnt sacrifice;
Grant thee according to thine own heart;
And fulfil all thy purpose.
We will rejoice in thy victory,
In the name of our God we will exult:
The Lord fulfil all thy petitions.

Now know I that the Lord saveth his anointed;
He will answer him from his holy heaven
With the saving strength of his right hand.
Some through chariots, and some through horses,
But we will prevail through the name of the Lord our God.
They are brought down and fallen:
But we are risen, and stand upright.

O Lord, save the king,
And answer us on the day when we call.

The change of tone at the opening of the second stanza is usually explained to mean that 'a sacrifice has probably been just offered to make the war a "holy war."' The Psalmist is confident that his prayer is granted, and sees the victory in advance.

In Psalm xxi the invocation of the king seems couched in terms of oriental exaggeration, but Professor Cheyne notices that Pliny, in writing to Trajan, speaks of his 'aeternitas.' In the second stanza the commentators dispute whether the 'thy's' and 'thou's'

refer to God or the king. In either case the sentiment resembles that of the majority of warlike songs of other nations.

The king joyeth in thy strength, O Lord;
And in thy salvation how greatly doth he rejoice!
Thou hast given him his heart's desire,
And hast not withholden the request of his lips.
For thou meetest him with excellent blessings:
Thou settest a crown of pure gold on his head.
He asked life of thee, and thou gavest it him,
Even length of days for ever and ever.
His glory is great through thy salvation:
Honour and majesty hast thou laid upon him.
For thou makest him most blessed for ever:
Thou gladdenest him with joy before thy countenance.

For the king trusteth in the Lord,
And through the lovingkindness of the Most High he shall not be moved.
Thine hand shall find out all thine enemies:
Thy right hand shall find out those that hate thee.
Thou shalt make them as a fiery oven in the time when thou shewest thy face:
The Lord shall swallow them up in his wrath.
And the fire shall devour them.
Their fruit shalt thou destroy from the earth,
And their seed from among the children of men.
If they intend evil against thee,
If they imagine a mischievous device, they will not be able to perform it.
For thou wilt make them turn their back,
Thou wilt make ready thine arrows upon thy strings against the face of them.

Be thou exalted, Lord, in thine own strength:
So will we sing and praise thy power.

§ 4. *The sixty-first Psalm.*—In the next Psalm (lxi) the singer is far from the Temple, and yearns for the spiritual comfort which he had found within it. Yet even in his apparent dependence upon an outward building he was winning his way to inward freedom. Half unconsciously to himself the 'covert of God's wings' was

affording to him the protection which they are wide enough to give throughout the world.

Who the king may be is little less uncertain here than in Psalms xx and xxi.

Hear my cry, O God;
Attend unto my prayer.
From the end of the earth I cry unto thee, for my heart is overwhelmed:
Lead me to the rock that is too high for me.
For thou art my refuge,
And a strong tower from the enemy.
May I dwell in thy tent for ever:
May I take refuge in the covert of thy wings.

For thou, O God, hearest my vows:
Thou grantest the request of those that fear thy name.
Mayest thou prolong the king's life:
May his years be as many generations.
May he abide before God for ever:
Appoint thy lovingkindness and truthfulness to guard him. (?)
So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever,
As I daily perform my vows.

'Too high for me.' The rock of safety is too hard and high for him to climb by his own unaided powers. It is not mere physical safety to which the singer refers. He prays God to help him to inward as well as to outward security, to the confidence of faith as well as to protection from the enemy.

§ 5. *The seventy-second Psalm.*—Of the sixth Psalm of this group (lxxii) there are, as it seems to me, only two probable interpretations. Either the Psalm was written as a congratulatory ode upon the accession of some foreign potentate, of whose kingdom Judæa formed a province, or it refers to the Messiah. If the first hypothesis be true, the king is probably Ptolemy Philadelphus (285–247 B.C.). It may also be that when the Psalm was admitted into the second collection, it was given a Messianic interpretation, and was touched up and expanded to suit the new meaning. The second stanza may be such an addition. But it is also quite conceivable that the king was from the beginning (in the mind and intention of the original writer) the Messiah of the future.

Professor Cheyne, who had before argued for Ptolemy, now adopts the Messianic explanation, and to me too it appears the more probable.

Give the king thy judgements, O God,
And thy righteousness unto the king's son.
May he judge thy people with righteousness,
And thy poor with judgement.
May the mountains bear peace to the people,
And the hills righteousness.
May he judge the afflicted of the people,
May he save the children of the needy,
And crush the oppressor.
May they fear him as long as the sun
And the moon endure, throughout all generations. (?)
May he come down like rain upon the mown grass:
As showers that water the earth.
In his days may righteousness flourish;
And abundance of peace till the moon be no more.

May he have dominion also from Sea to Sea,
And from the River unto the ends of the earth.
May his foemen bow before him;
And his enemies lick the dust.
May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles bring presents:
May the kings of Sheba and Seba offer gifts.
May all kings fall down before him,
And all nations serve him.

For he delivereth the needy when he crieth;
The poor also, and him that hath no helper.
He spareth the poor and needy,
And saveth the souls of the needy.
He releaseth their soul from oppression and violence:
And precious is their blood in his sight.

May he live, and may there be given him of the gold of Sheba: (?)
Let prayer be made for him continually;
All day long let them bless him.
May there be abundance of corn in the land upon the top of the mountains;

The fruit thereof shall rustle like Lebanon:
And let them blossom out of the city like grass of the earth. (?)
May his name endure for ever:
May his name have increase as long as the sun:
May all nations bless themselves by him.

Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel,
Who alone doeth wondrous things.
And blessed be his glorious name for ever:
And let the whole earth be filled with his glory; Amen, and Amen.

'The king's son.' If the Messiah is meant, we have to assume that the 'Psalmist leaps over the interval between the last king of Judah and the accession of the Messiah, and represents the latter as the son of all the kings who have gone before' (Cheyne).

'May he judge.' These optatives can also be rendered by simple futures.

'The afflicted of the people.' If the king is Ptolemy, this is merely a synonym for the Jews. Undoubtedly the Jews of the post-exilic period frequently describe themselves as 'poor,' 'afflicted,' 'needy.'

'The River': the Euphrates. Wellhausen, who adopts the Ptolemaic explanation, comments thus: 'Palestine being included, this river must be mentioned as forming the north-eastern boundary. Consequently it is neither a Chaldaean, nor a Persian, nor a Seleucid king that is meant, but an Egyptian. His power extends over the islands of the Mediterranean, over Sheba (in Southern Arabia) and Seba (in Ethiopia): Egypt, then, is the centre.'

'For he delivereth.' We may equally well translate: 'for he will deliver.'

'May he live.' A difficult line. Wellhausen connects it with what precedes, translating, 'Their blood in his sight is precious, so that they live and give him gold of Sheba'; and his explanation is that it is the Jews who are spoken of, not the poor literally. 'These *poor* are rich: they promise the king that if he will treat them well, they will give him much gold and will pray for him. They pay tribute, and, in consideration thereof, enjoy protection.'

'Blessed be the Lord God': the doxology closing the second book of the five into which the Psalter is now divided.

The picture of the righteous king may be compared with that in the eleventh chapter of Isaiah (p. 336). Here as there the external blessings are the outward accompaniment of inward

worth. The true foundation of the throne are the two sovereign virtues of the Hebrew poets and seers: justice and compassion. And these remain the kingly virtues for all time.

§ 6. *The one hundred and first Psalm: 'Misericordiam et judicium.'*—The seventh Psalm (ci) of the group is 'a description of the ideal character of an Israelitish ruler, dramatically put into such a ruler's mouth.' Professor Cheyne maintains that this ruler is probably Jonathan or Simon the Maccabee. 'The early Maccabean rulers deemed themselves specially charged to expel from Jerusalem those Jews who were inclined to heathenism.' In its strength and in its weakness the Psalm would fit in with a Maccabean origin. It is unnecessary to explain (for it is obvious) wherein that weakness and strength consist.

I will sing of lovingkindness and justice;
  Unto thee, O Lord, will I make melody.
I will give heed to the perfect way;
  O when wilt thou come unto me?
  I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.
I will set no wicked thing before mine eyes:
  I hate the work of them that turn aside;
  It shall not cleave to me.
A froward heart shall depart from me:
  I will not know wickedness.
Whoso privily slandereth his neighbour, him will I cut off:
  Him that hath an high look and a proud heart I will not suffer.
Mine eyes shall be upon the faithful of the land, that they may dwell with me:
  He that walketh in a perfect way, he shall serve me.
He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my house;
  He that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight.
Every morning will I destroy all the wicked of the land;
  That I may cut off all wicked doers from the city of the Lord.

§ 7. *The second Psalm: 'Quare fremuerunt gentes?'*—The eighth Psalm (ii) of the ten was famous in old Christian theology, but is religiously of small value; the controversies connected with it, as well as the arguments based upon it, have lost their worth and their importance. Here the king is undoubtedly either the Messiah, or the people of Israel who are to fulfil

Messianic functions. The language partly recalls the words of Nathan to David (Part I, p. 238). Both the Messiah and the people of Israel were sometimes spoken of as the special son of God; 'begotten this day' would be a poetic paraphrase for the day of installation into the kingdom. The Psalmist, like the prophets before him, expects that the great Messianic age will dawn speedily, but his anticipations of it are somewhat worldly and material. The date of the Psalm is uncertain; it was probably written at some period of commotion, but not of pressing calamity. Doubtless many moments in the Persian or Greek epochs were of such a character. The fifth line in the last stanza is corrupt, and, as it stands, untranslatable. Hence my dots. The Authorized Version translates 'Kiss the son'; but this is impossible, because the Hebrew words do not bear that sense. Moreover, the following verbs refer to God. Probably something like 'seek his face' or 'receive instruction' stood in the original. In the third stanza the 'son' is the speaker.

Why do the nations rage,
And the peoples imagine emptiness?
The kings of the earth take counsel,
And the rulers consult together,
Against the Lord, and against his anointed, saying,
'Let us break their bands asunder,
And cast away their cords from us.'

He that sitteth in the heavens laugheth:
The Lord hath them in derision.
Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath,
And confound them in his sore displeasure:
'But I—I have appointed my king
Upon my holy hill of Zion.'

'I will declare the decree:
The Lord hath said unto me:
"Thou art my son;
This day have I begotten thee.
Ask of me, and I will give thee the nations for thine inheritance,
And the uttermost parts of the earth for thy possession.
Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron;
Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."'

Be wise now therefore, O ye kings:
Be instructed, ye judges of the earth.
Serve the Lord with fear,
And quiver with trembling.
. . . . . .
Lest he be angry and ye perish,
For his wrath is kindled easily;
Happy are all they that take refuge in him.

Of the two possible interpretations of this Psalm, the one which interprets the 'son' to be the Messiah (i.e. the future King of the Davidic line) seems the more probable. It is adopted by both Professor Wellhausen and Professor Cheyne. The former says: 'The Messiah is the speaker, and the whole Psalm is composed in his name. It is not merely the hopes concerning the future to which he gives expression; it is the claims to world-wide dominion already cherished by the Jewish Theocracy. All the heathen are destined to obey the Jews; if they fail to do so, they are rebels. The Messiah is the incarnation of Israel's universal rule. He and Israel are almost identical, and it matters little whether we say that Israel *has* or *is* the Messiah. On the day when Jehovah founded the Theocracy, he gave it the right to unlimited earthly dominion. This right is involved in the very idea of the Theocracy. Zion, as being the seat of the divine rule, is *ipso facto* the seat of universal rule.'

Professor Cheyne translates the last few lines thus—

> 'Serve the Lord with fear,
> And do homage with trembling,
> Lest he be angry and your course end in ruin.'

The words found in the Authorized Version, 'Kiss the son,' are, he says, 'due to a misunderstanding. "Kiss," i.e. "do homage," should certainly be substituted for "Rejoice" (see the Authorized Version) in the preceding line; "the son" is a supposed translation of what is really a fragment of the word rendered "with trembling"' (*Jewish Religious Life after the Exile*, p. 112).

§ 8. *The one hundred and tenth Psalm.*—The next Psalm (cx) had, like its predecessor, an importance in olden days which has now vanished away. Religiously its worth, like that of Psalm ii, is small. The king is either the Messiah, or a Maccabean prince, possibly Simon, whose triumphs led the Psalmist to believe that he was to be the Messianic monarch prophesied of old. The Psalm ends abruptly; it is apparently a mere fragment.

The Lord said unto my lord,
'Sit thou at my right hand,
Until I make thine enemies thy footstool.'
The Lord will stretch forth thy mighty sceptre out of Zion:
'Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies.'
Thy people are full willing on the day of thy muster on the holy mountains:

. . . . . .

The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent,
'Thou art a priest for ever after the manner of Melchizedek.' (?)
The Lord at thy right hand
Shattereth kings in the day of his wrath.
He judgeth among the nations,
He filleth the wide land with corpses;
He shattereth the heads of . . .
He drinketh of the brook in the way;
Therefore will he lift up the head. (?)

In the last four lines the subject is apparently the king. If the text be sound, the words at the opening of the second stanza, translated, 'Thou art a priest for ever after the manner of Melchizedek,' refer to a story about Abraham which I have not included in Part I. A king of Salem (i. e. Jerusalem) is there called Melchizedek (*king of righteousness*), and he is also described as a priest of 'El Elyon,' 'God most high.' The ruler in the Psalm is to be both priest and prince, as was indeed the case with Simon the Maccabee. The story about Abraham runs as follows:—

'And it came to pass in the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, that Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of nations made war with Bera king of Sodom, and with Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, and Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela, which is Zoar. All these were joined together in the vale of Siddim, which is the salt sea. Twelve years they had served Chedorlaomer, and in the thirteenth year they rebelled. And in the fourteenth year came Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him, and smote the Rephaim in Ashteroth Karnaim, and the Zuzim in Ham, and the Emim in the plain of Kiriathaim, and the Horites in their mount Seir, unto El-paran, which is east of the wilderness. Then they returned, and came to En-mishpat, which is Kadesh, and smote all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites, that dwelt in Hazezon-tamar.

'Then there went out the king of Sodom, and the king of Gomorrah, and the king of Admah, and the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (the same is Zoar;) and they joined battle with them in the vale of Siddim; namely, with Chedorlaomer the king of Elam, and with Tidal king of nations, and Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar; four kings against five. And the vale of Siddim was full of springs of naphtha; and when the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, they fell into them; and they that remained fled to the mountain. And they took all the goods of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their victuals, and went their way. And they took Lot, Abraham's brother's son, who dwelt in Sodom, and his goods, and departed.

'And there came one that had escaped, and told Abraham the Hebrew; for he dwelt by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol, and brother of Aner: and these were confederate with Abraham. And when Abraham heard that Lot was taken captive, he mustered his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued unto Dan. And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is north of Damascus. And he brought back all the goods, and also brought again his nephew Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people.

'And after he had smitten Chedorlaomer and the kings that were with him and was returning, the king of Sodom went out to meet him into the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale.

'And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was a priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said, Blessed be Abraham of the most high God, creator of heaven and earth: and blessed be the most high God, who hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. And Abraham gave him tithes of all.

'And the king of Sodom said unto Abraham, Give me the persons, but keep the goods to thyself. And Abraham said to the king of Sodom, I lift up mine hand unto the Lord, the most high God, the creator of heaven and earth, that not a thread or a shoelatchet, even anything that is thine, will I take, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abraham rich: save only that which the young men have eaten, and the portion of the men who went with me, Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre; let them take their portion.'

§ 9. *The forty-fifth Psalm.*—The last Psalm of this group is the forty-fifth. It is a grand song of congratulation to a king upon his marriage shortly after his accession to the throne.

Though the Psalmist writes as a courtier, he wears his court robes 'with a difference.' His conception of kingship and of its duties is no mean one. Who the king was is quite uncertain. Among the conjectures is Ptolemy Philadelphus, and he is perhaps as likely as any other. In the days of the Ptolemies it would not have been impossible for a Hebrew poet to have called Jehovah the God of the Egyptian king. We may compare the Second Isaiah's appellations of Cyrus. Jehovah is Ptolemy's God, though Ptolemy knew him not. The king's might is due to the only God who can grant it, for other god there is none.

Professor Cheyne, who used to hold that the king was Ptolemy Philadelphus, now believes that here too the Psalmist is depicting the Messianic age and the Messianic king. 'The Messiah (who is modelled upon the idealized Solomon) has come to the throne. To complete his happiness and to continue his line he is about to contract a marriage with a "king's daughter," or rather "royal maiden." The Psalm is an encomium on the royal pair, who are supposed to have just met. The imaginative licence of the poet is great. But he does not lose his hold on the main object of the Messiah's existence, which is not mere private happiness, but the conferring of benefits on the church-nation.' One cannot help wondering whether this explanation will hold its own and make its way. But thought and language make it almost certain that the Psalm is post-exilic and late: so the choice seems to lie between a foreign prince and the Messiah.

My heart bubbleth with a good matter;
I address my work unto the king;
My tongue is the pen of a ready scribe.
Thou art fairer than the children of men:
Grace is poured upon thy lips:
Therefore God hath blessed thee for ever.

Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O hero,
Even thy glory and thy majesty.
Ride forth prosperously
On behalf of truth and humility and righteousness;
And thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things.
Let thine arrows be sharp
In the heart of the king's enemies;
Let the peoples fall under thee.
Thy throne shall endure for ever and ever:
The sceptre of thy kingdom is a sceptre of equity.

Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness:
Therefore the Lord thy God hath anointed thee
With the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

All thy garments smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia,
Out of the ivory palace stringed instruments make thee glad.
King's daughters are within thy walls:
Upon thy right hand standeth the queen in gold of Ophir.
'Hearken, O daughter, and behold, and incline thine ear;
Forget thine own people, and thy father's house;
And let the king desire thy beauty,
For he is thy lord—bow down unto him.
And the daughter of Tyre shall come with a gift;
The rich among the peoples shall intreat thy favour.'

All glorious is the king's daughter:
Of pearls set in gold is her raiment.
In broidered apparel is she brought unto the king:
The virgins her companions do follow her:
With gladness and rejoicing they are led along:
They enter into the king's palace.

Instead of thy fathers shall be thy children,
Whom thou mayest make princes in all the earth.
I will make thy name to be remembered in all generations:
Therefore shall peoples praise thee for ever and ever.

Professor Cheyne is a Christian, and to him naturally the word 'Christian' is equivalent to 'truly or ideally religious.' A Jewish commentator might use the word 'Jewish' in a similar way. With that proviso in our minds as regards the *first* use of the word Christian in the passage I am about to quote, I do not think that we can find a truer eulogy of our forty-fifth Psalm than his. 'A philosopher has called the Jews the most optimistic race in history. Elastic, indeed, was their optimism; it adjusted itself to disillusionments without number, and it rested on the truth that righteousness tendeth to life, and is the only secure basis of an empire. And is not this truth a profoundly Christian one? and, as we read the "goodly words" of the forty-fifth Psalm, may we not join hands with the author across the centuries, and acknowledge a still present power in his words to delight and to

instruct? Lovers of the Psalms cannot admit that chivalry is a purely Christian conception. Long ages before Arthur, "truth, humility and righteousness" formed the Hebrew ideal of kingship, and for that grand fifth verse of our Psalm I know no better parallel than the song of Arthur's knights :—

Blow trumpet! he will lift us from the dust.
Blow trumpet! live the strength and die the lust!
Clang battle-axe and clash brand! Let the King reign.'

CHAPTER VIII

DIDACTIC PSALMS

§ 1. *The fifteenth Psalm: 'Domine, quis habitabit?'*—I pass from the Royal Psalms to a very different category. For this chapter will be devoted to Didactic Psalms, songs of teaching. Some of the finest Psalms in the Psalter fall under this head. I shall include twelve Psalms in the group, of varied character and probably of various dates, but yet all didactic. Sometimes the teaching is direct, and sometimes it is, as it were, that indirect teaching which the record of personal experience can afford.

The first Psalm in the group (xv) sets forth the conditions for closer intimacy with God. Who may be God's 'guest'? The Hebrew word is no noun but a verb, and the question is, Who may 'sojourn' in the divine tent? But the verb—'*Gur*'—has close connexions with the noun—*Ger*. *Ger*, as we know, is usually translated *stranger*; the *ger* is the foreigner who has settled in Israel's land. In one sense we are all God's '*Gerim*,' for he is the world's owner (Part I, p. 277). But in a narrower sense only they may secure the inviolability and security of guestship with God who conform to God's demands. These demands are not physical but moral, just as God's tent (here suggested by the Temple) is not physical but spiritual. You cannot get near to God locally; you cannot touch the ropes or pegs of his tent and so secure protection. You can only approach him spiritually and morally. It is goodness alone which gives you a passport, inviolable and abiding. As it is not only in days of old that 'the symbol has been placed above the thing signified and a superstitious efficacy attached to the externals of worship, this Psalm has an equal value for every age, in keeping before the mind the great lesson that sanctity of life and truth of heart are the absolute essentials of a spiritual religion' (*The Four Friends*).

Lord, who may sojourn in thy tent?
Who may dwell in thy holy hill?
He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness,
And speaketh the truth in his heart.
He that backbiteth not with his tongue,
Nor doeth evil to his neighbour,
Nor uttereth a reproach against his neighbour.
In whose eyes a vile person is despised;
But he honoureth them that fear the Lord.
He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.
He that putteth not out his money to usury,
Nor taketh a bribe against the innocent.
He that doeth these things shall never be moved.

'A vile person is despised,' be his wealth and station what they may.

'He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.' A doubtful translation of a doubtful text. If it is correct, it must mean: If you have made an agreement with anybody, the agreement must be carried out, even though, contrary to your original anticipation, it should turn out to your own loss or damage.

Note the strong indictment of 'usury,' which does not merely mean 'usury' in our sense, but any 'interest' whatever. The law had forbidden 'interest' to a fellow-citizen; here it is forbidden generally. To receive money from money, to let gold bear gold, seemed to ancient moralists unnatural and wicked. All interest on money is condemned by Aristotle. We know now that such condemnation rests on a misapprehension, but the truth is that the 'interest' with which our Psalmist was acquainted *was* probably usury in our sense, and he was right to condemn it.

§ 2. *The twenty-fourth Psalm: 'Domini est terra.'*—Closely similar to the fifteenth is the first part of the twenty-fourth Psalm, to which another psalm-fragment has apparently been added by the compiler. The added fragment seems to be a part of a processional song of victory, in which God is represented metaphorically as returning 'to his sanctuary after fighting for and delivering his people.' Fine as the fragment is, the first part of the Psalm is religiously far finer. The reason why the second part has been added to the first would seem to be that the idea of the 'holy place' connects them. The 'hill' leads to the 'gates' through which the 'place' is entered. But in the first part the

'holy place' is semi-metaphorical. The Temple suggests the idea, but the idea is not limited to the Temple.

The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof;
The world, and they that dwell therein.
For he hath founded it upon the seas,
And established it upon the floods.

Who may go up unto the hill of the Lord?
Or who may stand in his holy place?
He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart;
Who hath not set his soul upon wickedness,
Nor sworn deceitfully.
He shall receive blessing from the Lord,
And righteousness from the God of his salvation.
Such is the generation of them that seek him,
That seek thy face, O God of Jacob.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates,
And be ye lift up, ye ancient doors,
That the King of glory may come in.

'Who is the King of glory?'

The Lord, strong and mighty,
The Lord mighty in battle.
Lift up your heads, O ye gates,
Yea, lift them up, ye ancient doors,
That the King of glory may come in.

'Who is the King of glory?'

The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.

'Clean hands and a pure heart': a fine summing up of the noble character. Deed and thought correspond. Wellhausen renders: 'sinless hands and a pure conscience.'

'Who hath not set his soul upon wickedness.' The phrase is not quite easy. Wellhausen renders: 'Who cherishes no longing for evil;' Driver: 'who hath not lifted up his soul unto unreality,' and 'unreality' he explains as 'what is either frivolous or insincere.'

§ 3. *The thirty-second Psalm.*—The third Psalm in this group (xxxii) strikes another note. It deals with the great central

problem of religion, which is Sin. We might on another plan of grouping unite it with the fifty-first. The Psalmist, who speaks in his own individual person of personal experience, tells a tale of his soul. The main facts are not outward but inward. Or rather, even if the facts be outward, it is the inner feelings accompanying them which alone give to these facts their value and their meaning. The Psalmist had sinned, and had obstinately sought to 'conceal' his sin from God by refusing to recognize it to himself. Then calamity overtook him. But he refused to show penitence or to feel it. He persisted perchance in evildoing—in evilbeing. And yet his soul was sore: anguish, unacknowledged but yet real, possessed him. Silent before God, his guilty conscience 'roared' within him. Then at last he found the remedy. He poured forth his soul's burden unto God, and the wall of severance fell. He was once more 'at one' with God. The removal of his outward calamity accompanied his inward peace and testified to God's forgiveness. Therefore he bids all who, in spite of human frailty, love God to pray unto him when distress and danger overtake them. The great waters shall not reach them. Here the Psalm may seem to sink to lower levels. For all the words imply is that God will save the humble worshipper in times of peril. To the Psalmists the consciousness of guilt was often awakened by the presence of trouble, so that the Hebrew word for 'guilt' is sometimes almost equivalent to 'punishment.' Nevertheless it would not seem overstrained to give the first three stanzas of the poem the more spiritual interpretation. Even if 'guilt' in the last line of the third stanza includes punishment, it certainly *also* includes the inward feeling of alienation from God. And the opening adjective means more than 'fortunate.' It implies inward contentment and joy.

Happy is he whose transgression is forgiven,
  Whose sin is covered.
Happy is the man unto whom the Lord reckoneth not iniquity,
  And in whose spirit there is no guile.

When I kept silence, my bones wasted away
  Through my roaring all the day long.
For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me:
  My sap was turned into the drought of summer.
I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity I hid not:
  I said, 'I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord;'
  And thou forgavest the guilt of my sin.

Therefore let every loving one pray unto thee in a time
of distress;
When the flood of great waters is heard, they will not
reach him.
Thou art my hiding place; thou wilt preserve me from
trouble;
Thou dost encompass me with security. (?)

I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou
shalt go:
I will direct mine eyes upon thee. (?)
Be ye not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no
understanding:
Who must be held in with bit and bridle,
Else they will not come near unto thee.
Many sorrows have the wicked:
But he that trusteth in the Lord, lovingkindness shall
compass him about.
Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous:
And shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.

'In whose spirit there is no guile.' The guileless man here is he who has freely and unreservedly confessed his whole sin unto God.

'Thy hand was heavy upon me.' There seems to have been a combination of outward and inward trouble. God sent misfortune, but this misfortune was not humbly accepted as the punishment of sin. Nevertheless the Psalmist was ill at ease: he tried to deny his sin to himself and to God. But the more he did so, the more the inward conflict, sharpened by the outward trouble, raged within him. When he confessed his sin, he was at peace with God, and the removal of his punishment showed him that God had forgiven him. The words of the Psalm are not satisfactorily accounted for on the supposition that the whole experience was inward, and that there is no question of external calamity at all; on the other hand, a purely outward interpretation is still less adequate. We have apparently to assume a double and parallel process both at the outset and the close: the punishment sharpens, but does not cause, the inward conflict; the peace of confession is followed and increased by the removal of the punishment—the outward and visible sign of God's forgiveness.

The first five lines of the last stanza (beginning 'I will instruct thee') are somewhat obscure. Is God or the Psalmist the speaker? The transition too seems abrupt.

'Be ye not as the horse.' The meaning seems to be that there is no absolute necessity for man to undergo the lessons of adversity. He who trusts in God and gives good heed (in other words, he who tries his best) will not need to be brought back from a sinful life by the bit and bridle of calamity. He need not enter on the life of sin at all. And there is truth in this doctrine. No man is sinless, but prosperity need not necessarily make a man a sinner, nor is calamity the necessary precedent of righteousness. And yet the highest developments of human character have been produced by calamity, just as without suffering there could be no sacrifice. And sacrifice is love's opportunity.

The gladness of the opening is repeated chorus-like at the close. Professor Cheyne is right when he notes that the religion of the Hebrew Bible 'is throughout one of joy.' But he is wrong when he says that 'the final ruin of the outward forms of Judaism' (i.e. temple and state) 'alone destroyed this joyousness.' Religious joy has ever been a characteristic of Judaism, and it was probably deeper and more widely spread *after* the destruction of the Temple than before it. There is a deep meaning in the words of the Midrash: 'The Holy Spirit does not rest where there is sloth or despondency or jesting or frivolity or vanity, but it rests only where there is joy.' As strangers can rarely know the inner joy of a home, so outsiders can rarely understand the joy and rapture of a religion which is not their own.

§ 4. *The thirty-fourth Psalm: 'Benedicam Domino.'*—The following Psalm (xxxiv) is alphabetical, like the twenty-fifth, with which it has other affinities. The last verse was added subsequently in order that the Psalm might not end inauspiciously. The fine thoughts explain themselves, and need no commentary.

I will bless the Lord at all times:
  His praise shall continually be in my mouth.
My soul shall make her boast in the Lord:
  The humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.
O magnify the Lord with me,
  And let us exalt his name together.
I sought the Lord, and he heard me,
  And delivered me from all my fears.
O look unto him, and shine with joy:
  And your faces will not be ashamed.
This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him,
  And saved him out of all his troubles.

The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him,
And delivereth them.
O taste and see that the Lord is good:
Happy is the man that trusteth in him.
O fear the Lord, ye his saints:
For there is no want to them that fear him.
The young lions do pine, and suffer hunger:
But they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing.
Come, ye children, hearken unto me:
I will teach you the fear of the Lord.
What man is he that desireth life,
And loveth many days, that he may see good?
Keep thy tongue from evil,
And thy lips from speaking guile.
Depart from evil, and do good;
Seek peace, and pursue it.
The face of the Lord is against them that do evil,
To cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.
The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous,
And his ears are open unto their cry.
They cry, and the Lord heareth,
And delivereth them out of all their troubles.
The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart;
And saveth such as are of a contrite spirit.
Many are the afflictions of the righteous:
But the Lord delivereth him out of them all.
He keepeth all his bones:
Not one of them is broken.
Calamity shall slay the wicked:
And they that hate the righteous shall be condemned.
The Lord redeemeth the soul of his servants:
And none of them that trust in him shall be condemned.

§ 5. *The thirty-seventh Psalm: 'Noli aemulari.'*—Another 'alphabetic' Psalm follows (xxxvii). It deals with, or perhaps I should rather say, it touches on, the same subject as the Book of Job, but hardly rises very far above the doctrine of the friends. The wicked end miserably; the righteous are rewarded. Many verses in the Psalm we can still accept with profit, but many others we have to interpret in a sense other than that intended by their author. Only so can we make them accord with the truths of experience. And religion cannot be ultimately

in disaccord with facts; it is rather their synthesis and interpretation; the light which transfigures them; the bond which holds them together.

Fret not thyself because of evildoers,
Neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity.
For they shall soon fade away like the grass,
And wither as the green herb.

Trust in the Lord, and do good;
Dwell in the land, and pursue fidelity.
Delight thyself also in the Lord;
And he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

Commit thy way unto the Lord;
Trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass.
And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light,
And thy judgement as the noonday.

Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him:
Fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way,
Because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.

Cease from anger, and forsake wrath:
Fret not thyself; it leadeth only to evildoing. (?)
For evildoers shall be cut off:
But those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth.

For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be:
Thou shalt give heed to his place, and he shall not be there.
But the meek shall inherit the earth;
And shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace.

The wicked plotteth against the just,
And gnasheth upon him with his teeth.
The Lord laugheth at him:
For he seeth that his day is coming.

The wicked have drawn out the sword, and have bent their bow,
To cast down the poor and needy,
And to slay such as are upright of way.

Their sword shall enter into their own heart,
And their bows shall be broken.

A little that a righteous man hath
Is better than the great riches of the wicked.
For the arms of the wicked shall be broken:
But the Lord upholdeth the righteous.

The Lord knoweth the days of the upright:
And their inheritance shall be for ever.
They shall not be ashamed in the evil time:
And in the days of famine they shall be satisfied.

For the wicked shall perish,
And the enemies of the Lord shall be as the kindling of the furnace:
They are consumed like smoke; they are consumed.

The wicked borroweth, and payeth not again:
But the righteous sheweth mercy, and giveth.
For such as are blessed of him shall inherit the earth;
And they that are cursed of him shall be cut off.

The steps of a man are ordered by the Lord,
Even of him in whose way he delighteth.
Though he fall, he shall not lie prone:
For the Lord upholdeth his hand.

I have been young, and now am old;
Yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.
He is ever merciful and lendeth;
And his seed is blessed.

Depart from evil, and do good;
And dwell for evermore.
For the Lord loveth justice,
And forsaketh not his loving ones.

The unrighteous are destroyed for ever:
And the seed of the wicked shall be cut off.
The righteous shall inherit the land,
And dwell therein for ever.

The mouth of the righteous speaketh wisdom,
And his tongue talketh of justice.
The law of his God is in his heart;
None of his steps slide.

The wicked watcheth the righteous,
And seeketh to slay him.
The Lord will not desert him in his calamity,
Nor condemn him when he is judged.

Wait on the Lord, and keep his way,
And he shall exalt thee to inherit the land:
When the wicked are cut off, thou shalt see it.

I have seen the wicked in great power,
And spreading himself like a green cedar:
I passed by, and, lo, he was not:
Yea, I sought him, but he could not be found.

Keep integrity and pursue uprightness;
For there is a posterity to the man of peace.
But the transgressors shall be utterly destroyed:
The posterity of the wicked shall be cut off.

The salvation of the righteous is of the Lord:
He is their strength in the time of trouble.
And the Lord helpeth them, and delivereth them:
He delivereth them from the wicked, and saveth them,
Because they taketh refuge in him.

'Fret not thyself.' A famous phrase and a noble thought. The Hebrew means literally: 'Be not incensed.' To the injunction we have now to give a deeper reason. Whether the wicked prosper or fail, their 'wellbeing' is hollow.

'Delight thyself also in the Lord.' The means is the end. So far as feeling goes, this delight is the goal of religion.

'Rest in the Lord.' This is the rendering of the Authorized Version. Coverdale has 'Hold thee still in the Lord,' which is somewhat more literal and equally significant.

'The Lord laugheth at him.' All anthropomorphisms are false, but there are good ones and bad ones. This is a bad one. At human wickedness God rather weeps than laughs.

'I have been young, and now am old,' &c. Mr. Abrahams, than

whom there is no more competent authority, tells me that no verse in the Bible has been dearer to the Jews in their varied and terrible sufferings than this one. And yet these very sufferings continually contradicted it. Faith and hope prevailed over experience, and spiritual interpretations were substituted for the literal meaning. What a lesson have we here! The worst sufferers are the best believers; sorrow deepens fidelity: the persecuted cling with all the greater confidence to the loving watchfulness of God.

§ 6. *The forty-ninth Psalm: 'Audite haec, omnes gentes.'*—The thought of the next Psalm (xlix) is far deeper. The writer is, as it were, trembling on the verge of the larger hope; the veil is lifting; some would say that it has lifted. The subject is very similar to that of the previous Psalm; unfortunately the Hebrew is difficult, and in places corrupt.

The belief in immortality was reached in Israel by more than one converging pathway. One way was the different treatment which God must allot to the good and the bad, to the faithful and the apostates, to Israel and its foes. The wicked would be gathered into Sheol for ever. What then of the righteous? The answers are various and come but slowly. (1) In the days of Messiah death shall be no more. (2) In the days of Messiah the righteous dead shall be quickened back into life eternal. But there was another way, better and more spiritual. The wicked and the 'foolish' are far from God, and the end of their 'pomp' is Sheol. But the righteous are near God now; and he will be near them for ever. How then can *they* go down to Sheol? *They* can never be separated (like the shades in Sheol) from God. Near the source of life, they will continue to live. What can death do unto them? Death is forgotten; death is ignored; death is overcome. Such seems to be the thought near which our Psalmist is hovering, but no one can mark with certainty the precise deductions which he has drawn for himself, or the exact point in the spiritual journey to which he had attained.

Hear this, all ye peoples;
  Give ear, all ye inhabitants of the world:
Both low and high,
  Rich and poor, together.
My mouth shall speak of wisdom;
  And the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.
I will incline mine ear to a parable:
  I will open my dark saying upon the harp.

Wherefore should I fear in the days of evil,
When the guilt of my foes surroundeth me,
Even of such as trust in their wealth,
And boast themselves in the multitude of their riches?
Surely none can redeem himself,
Nor give to God his ransom,
That he should still live for ever,
And not see the pit.
For the redemption of his soul is too costly,
He must let that alone for ever. (?)
For . . . . . .
The fool and the brutish perish,
And leave their wealth to others.
The graves are their houses for ever,
And their dwelling places to all generations,
Who called their lands after their own names. (?)
Man in his pomp abideth not:
He is like the beasts that perish.

This is the way of fools;
Yet after them men approve their speech. (?)
Like sheep they sink down unto Sheol;
Death is their shepherd;
[And the upright shall have dominion over them in the morning;]
Their form soon falleth to decay,
Sheol is become their dwelling. (?)
But God will redeem my soul;
From the grasp of Sheol he will take me.

Be not thou afraid when one groweth rich,
When the glory of his house is increased;
For when he dieth he shall carry nothing away:
His glory shall not descend after him.
Though while he lived he blessed his soul
(And forsooth men praise thee, when thou doest well to thyself):
He shall go to the generation of his fathers;
He shall never see the light.
Man in his pomp, but without understanding,
Is like the beasts that perish.

'None can redeem himself.' 'Redeem' in its literal and etymological sense: 'buy off,' 'deliver.'

'The redemption of his soul.' It is always to be remembered that '*soul*' is never used in the Psalter in its modern sense, as the spiritual and abiding personality. It means merely the 'self,' or the 'life.'

'For . . . . .' The Hebrew reads: 'For he will see that wise men die'—a doubly inapposite thought. 'He,' the rich 'fool,' or evil one, does not make this observation. He forgets the end of his pomp. And if 'he will see' is emended, and we read 'For the prudent and wise men die,' the difficulty remains that the death of the wise (or righteous) is just what the Psalmist ignores or denies. It might be argued that the 'wise' in this passage are they who are 'wise in their own sight,' whose wisdom is folly. But this is very doubtful. I therefore fully believe that the text is corrupt.

'And leave their wealth to others.' Note a certain animus against the rich, once or twice also observable elsewhere. The poor and the afflicted, the humble and the needy, are synonymous, and any of them are equivalent to the righteous. The poor and righteous sufferers are opposed both to the rich indifferentists and apostates within Israel and to Israel's ruling oppressors without. Worldly prosperity is now fully realized to be no sign of divine favour.

'Man in his pomp' is man in his folly; compare the second form of the refrain. Such men abide not; but the righteous and the needy, what of them? The inference is near. Unlike lives will meet with unlike destinies.

'The upright shall have dominion.' An obscure passage. Is the 'morning' the Messianic age? And what sort of dominion is intended? The words, according to Wellhausen, 'represent an interpolation which is extremely inappropriate here. But they show most characteristically the longing of the Jews for Messianic rule.'

'God will redeem my soul.' 'It would be,' said Professor Cheyne, 'the weakest of explanations to say that the Psalmist rejoices thus in the prospect of mere deliverance from the danger of death. A few years later, and the danger will return in a heightened degree.' No! the Psalmist has practically attained the highest; death is overcome by the assured salvation of God. 'The poet has that religious intuition which forms the kernel of the hope of immortality.' It should be stated, however, that Professor Cheyne has now abandoned this interpretation, and believes, with several other scholars, that the speaker is the

community. Israel will endure for ever. For several reasons I cannot concur. One reason I have already given in a note on Psalm xvi (p. 503). The Psalmists rarely, if ever, put into the mouth of Israel what they cannot, as Israelites, appropriate at least partially for themselves. The Psalmist enunciates no formulated doctrine of immortality, but he is moving forwards toward a conception of life and death in which Sheol, for those who love God and love righteousness, can have no place.

§ 7. *The seventy-third Psalm.*—My next 'didactic' Psalm (lxxiii) deals once more with the same problem, which is at once so old and so new. The difficulty of the thought is unfortunately accompanied, as is so frequently and naturally the case, by uncertainties of text. The solution in which the Psalmist rests is among the highest to which we can attain. After the last two Psalms we are, as Professor Cheyne says, 'no strangers to the problem which disturbs him, but nowhere, even in Job, do we find a more striking treatment of it.'

Surely God is good to Israel,
To such as are pure of heart.
But as for me, my feet had almost fallen,
My steps had well nigh slipped.
For I was envious at the boasters,
When I saw the prosperity of the wicked.

For they have no torments;
Sound and stalwart is their body.
They have no troubles as other men,
Neither are they plagued like other mortals.
Therefore pride is about their neck,
Violence covereth them as a garment.
From their fatness their iniquity cometh forth,
The imaginations of their heart overflow.
They mock and speak wickedly,
They talk loftily of oppression.
They set their mouth in the heavens,
And their tongue walketh through the earth.
Yet they are satisfied with bread;
And they drink water in abundance.
And they say, 'How doth God know?
And is there knowledge in the Most High?'

Behold, such are the ungodly;
Always secure, they increase in riches.

'Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain,
And washed my hands in innocency.
And all the day long have I been stricken,
And chastened every morning.'
If I were to have spoken thus,
I should have been faithless to the generation of thy children. (?)
But when I pondered to understand this,
It was a sore travail in mine eyes.
For my heart was embittered,
And I was pained within me.
For I was brutish and knew not;
I was as a beast toward thee.
Until I went into the sanctuary of God;
And considered their latter end.
Surely thou settest them in slippery places:
Thou castest them down into destruction.
How are they brought into desolation, as in a moment!
They are utterly consumed with terrors.
As a dream when one awaketh;
So, O Lord, when thou awakest, thou wilt despise their semblance. (?)

But I am continually with thee:
Thou holdest me by my right hand.
Thou wilt guide me according to thy purpose,
And afterward receive me with glory. (?)
Whom have I in heaven but thee?
And there is naught upon earth that I desire beside thee.
My flesh and my heart faileth:
Yet God is the rock of my heart and my portion for ever.
For, lo, they that are far from thee shall perish:
Thou destroyest all them that go astray from thee.
But as for me to be near unto God is my good;
I have put my refuge in the Lord God,
That I may declare all thy works.

'Surely God is good.' He begins with the end. To the pure in heart God is good, in spite of sorrows. For he is a possession which no outward fortune can take away.

The description of the wicked in their pride and contempt of God reminds us of Job.

'Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain.' If such is the world's government, what is the use of piety? Moreover, in addition to contemplating the prosperity of the wicked, the Psalmist had to suffer trouble and calamity. He was 'stricken all day.' The four lines in inverted commas are what the author was tempted to say, what the prosperity of the wicked and his own misfortunes suggested to him: the doubt born of experience.

'I should have been faithless.' 'He means, a traitor to the principle on which the community of the godly relies, namely, that God makes a distinction between the righteous and the wicked, and that the community of the godly is not left unaided by him' (Wellhausen).

'The sanctuary of God.' The Hebrew has an odd plural. It either means the Temple, where we know that the Psalmists were wont to go for spiritual enlightenment and communion, or the holy purposes of God, the plans of providence. So Wellhausen, who translates: 'Until I penetrated the mysteries of God.'

'Considered their latter end.' The first part of the solution is thus on the old, bitter lines. The wicked's prosperity is but for a season. Calamitous death comes suddenly.

'So, Lord, when thou awakest.' That is, when God 'awakes' for judgement.

'But I am continually with thee.' Here comes the second and truer part of the solution. The joy of nearness to God is the guarantee and reward of piety. Those who feel it can be indifferent to outward fortune and its seemingly unjust disproportion. Only the pure in heart can know and have the highest; only they can be 'with' God. And this communion is abiding.

'Thou wilt guide me.' God has a purpose in the lives of his friends. Their path is not haphazard.

'And afterward receive me.' These words could only refer to a life of blessedness after death, but it is very doubtful whether the Hebrew can mean this, or whether indeed the Hebrew which we have is Hebrew at all. Apart from this line we may truly say that in this Psalm, as in Psalm xlix, the death of the righteous is ignored and forgotten, the life with God triumphing over it, but yet immortality in our sense is rather implied than asserted.

Professor Cheyne, as in his explanation of Psalm xlix, again presses the Messianic and communal interpretation. He emends the text and reads: 'According to thy counsel thou wilt guide me, and make known to me the path of glory.' This 'path of glory' is the Messianic age, when the divine glory will be revealed

upon the earth. I do not think this explanation accounts for that note of personal experience which seems so clearly implied in this wonderful passage.

'Whom have I in heaven but thee?' Perhaps the most rapturous expression of spiritual religion in the Hebrew Bible.

'My flesh and my heart faileth.' This may mean, My physical strength is failing; nevertheless, God will always be my portion. Again, the Psalmist seems to hover on the brink of faith's greatest dogma. The verse may also, and perhaps ought to be rendered—

'Though my flesh and my heart should have wasted away,
God would be my rock and my portion for ever.'

Come what may, he trusts in God; come what may, God is his 'portion'—his joy and his assurance—for ever. 'God's in his heaven; all's right with the world.' 'For ever:' up to death, in death, and beyond death, if life beyond death there be. May we not thus interpret the Psalmist's words?

§ 8. *The fiftieth Psalm.*—In the following Psalm (l) the writer sets his teaching in a kind of prophetic framework. This is not unreasonable, for his doctrine is in accordance with the fundamental lessons of the prophets. Two classes of Israelites are before his mind; first, the formalists; secondly, the actual sinners. In its great utterance about sacrifices the Psalm must be closely compared with Psalms li and xl.

God, even God the Lord, hath spoken,
And called the earth from the rising of the sun unto the going down thereof.
Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty,
God hath shined forth.
Fire devoureth before him,
And it is very tempestuous round about him.
He calleth to the heavens above,
And to the earth, that he may judge his people.
'Gather my loving ones together unto me;
Those that made a covenant with me by sacrifice.'
And the heavens declare his righteousness:
For God is about to judge.

'Hear, O my people, and I will speak;
O Israel, and I will testify against thee:
The Lord thy God am I.

I will not reprove thee for thy sacrifices,
  Thy burnt offerings are continually before me.
I will take no bullock out of thy house,
  Nor he-goats out of thy folds.
For every beast of the forest is mine,
  And the cattle upon the hills of God.
I know all the birds of the mountains:
  And the moving creatures of the plain are in my mind.
If I were hungry, I would not tell thee:
  For the world is mine, and the fulness thereof.
Do I eat the flesh of bulls,
  Or drink the blood of goats?
Sacrifice unto God thanksgiving;
  And pay thy vows unto the Most High:
And call upon me in the day of trouble:
  I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.'

But unto the wicked, God saith,
  'What business hast thou to declare my statutes,
  Or to take my covenant in thy mouth?
Seeing thou hatest instruction,
  And castest my words behind thee.
When thou seest a thief, thou runnest after him,
  And with adulterers is thy portion.
Thou givest thy mouth to evil,
  And thy tongue frameth deceit.
Thou sittest and speakest against thy brother;
  Thou slanderest thine own mother's son.
These things hast thou done, and I have kept silence:
  Thou thinkest that I am altogether such an one as thyself;
  But I will chastise thee, and set it before thine eyes. (?)

'Now consider this, ye that forget God,
  Lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.
Whoso sacrificeth thanksgiving glorifieth me:
  And to him that is upright in his way I will shew the
    salvation of God.'

'Gather my loving ones.' The phrase is sarcastic. They are only duteous outwardly: the covenant which secured God's loving-kindness (*Chesed*) and demanded man's is on their side but formally obeyed.

Two of my helpful critics deny that any sarcasm is here intended.

One writes: 'It seems to me that because they do love God, they are to be taught what is truly acceptable to him. The wicked are addressed in quite a different fashion.' And the other writes: 'I cannot see the sarcasm. A child might give his parent a toy, wishing to show his love. Without really thinking about it, he imagines that a toy will please his father even as it satisfies and pleases himself. And God in this passage is virtually telling his "loving ones" to *think*: to make their gifts to him in fitting form. Quite otherwise does he speak to them who are evil in heart and mind, and have no love for him at all.'

'A covenant with me by sacrifice.' It should be made by something deeper, more spiritual. 'I desired lovingkindness and not sacrifice,' as Hosea said in the olden days.

'Sacrifice unto God thanksgiving.' True praise and true gratitude: these are the true sacrifice. And this inward thanksgiving is as the payment of our vows. 'Vowing too has become spiritualized' (Cheyne). This interpretation rests on the presupposition that the verb 'sacrifice' (*zabach*) is here used in a metaphorical sense, and also that the second line of the distich means virtually, 'and *so* pay thy vows unto the Most High,' i.e. your gratitude to God is equivalent to the payment of a vow. It should be stated that Dr. B. Jacob most strongly combats and denies this interpretation. According to him the Psalmist desires to attack that false conception of sacrifice which regards it as a present offered to God, a present by which man can get some advantage in his turn. The only form of sacrifice which is free from such a superstitious misconception is a thank-offering rendered for some deliverance or mercy already vouchsafed to us by God. Moreover, if any vow has been promised, it must be performed. So the Psalmist makes God say: 'Sacrifice the thank-offering and pay your vows, then you may (again) call on me in the day of trouble (no vows are needful), and I will deliver you, and you may honour me again (by a thank-offering). For he who sacrifices a thank-offering does me honour.' Ingenious and plausible as Dr. Jacob's interpretation is, I hardly think it does justice to the deeper thought of the Psalmist.

'Whoso sacrificeth thanksgiving.' The same questions crop up again. The second line of the distich is obscure. Some would translate the existing Hebrew text by: 'He who prepares his way,' i. e. prepares it rightly; but this rendering puts more in the words than they can bear. The emendation I have chosen only involves the change of a single letter. It is also adopted by Professor Cheyne, who translates: 'He that sacrifices thanksgiving glorifies me, and to him that is of blameless life, I will show

the deliverance of God.' 'Here,' he says, 'we have not only sacrifices, but even vows, which affected daily life still more than sacrifices, abrogated by being spiritualized. The only right vows are vows of amendment of life; the only right sacrifice is thanksgiving for God's innumerable mercies to Israel.'

§ 9. *The ninety-first Psalm.*—The following Psalm (xci) is familiar to us from its liturgical use. Some would regard it as the consoling answer to its predecessor, Psalm xc, with which let the reader by all means compare it. It sets forth the high faith of the believer to which all Israel may attain. False to experience literally (for the good suffer as well as the wicked), there is an ideal sense in which the believer has ever striven to say, 'Whatever befall me, I am with thee; therefore whatever befall me, it is well.'

(Happy is) he that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most
  High,
  That abideth under the shadow of the Almighty.
Who sayeth unto the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress:
  My God, in whom I trust.'

For he shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler,
  And from the noisome pestilence.
He shall cover thee with his pinions,
  And under his wings shalt thou take refuge:
  His faithfulness shall be thy shield and buckler.

Thou shalt not be afraid of the terror by night;
  Nor of the arrow that flieth by day;
Nor of the pestilence that walketh in darkness;
  Nor of the plague that wasteth at noonday.
A thousand shall fall at thy side,
  And ten thousand at thy right hand:
  But it shall not come nigh unto thee.
Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold it,
  And see the retribution of the wicked.

But as for thee, the Lord is thy shelter,
  Thou hast made the Most High thy refuge.
There shall no evil befall thee,
  Neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling.
For he shall give his angels charge concerning thee,
  To keep thee in all thy ways.

They shall bear thee on their hands,
  Lest thou strike thy foot against a stone.
Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder:
  The young lion and the dragon shalt thou trample under feet.

'Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him:
  I will set him on high, because he knoweth my name.
When he calleth upon me, I will answer him:
  I will be with him in trouble;
  I will deliver him, and honour him.
With long life will I satisfy him,
  And shew him my salvation.'

§ 10. *The one hundred and seventh Psalm: 'Confitemini Domino.'*—To group the following Psalm (cvii) accurately is again most difficult. It could with reasonable justification be regarded as one of the Psalms of thanksgiving, or again as one of the Psalms of praise. But perhaps the main intention is didactic, and so it may claim a place here.

Its date is doubtful; it may belong to the Grecian period, or it may be earlier. It refers to 'deliverances,' but it is not certain whether any, and if so what, special deliverances are intended. There is always in such post-exilic retrospects a general allusion either to the return from Babylon or to the Exodus from Egypt.

The main part of the Psalm (in stanzas two, three, four and five) gives four typical examples of deliverance, and urges gratitude to the Divine Saviour. In the last stanza 'the treatment becomes more meagre, the connexion less cared for, and the thought less original. The refrains too are dropped' (Cheyne). It is indeed not certain (so elastic are Hebrew tenses) what the relation of this last stanza to the foregoing five may actually be.

'O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good:
  For his lovingkindness endureth for ever.'
Let the redeemed of the Lord say so,
  Whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;
And gathered them out of the lands,
  From the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south.

They wandered in the wilderness and the desert,
  They found no city to dwell in;

Hungry and thirsty,
Their soul fainted within them:
Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble,
And he delivered them out of their distresses.
And he led them forth by a straight way,
That they might go to a city of habitation.
Oh let these give thanks unto the Lord for his goodness,
And for his wonderful works to the children of men!
For he hath satisfied the longing soul,
And hath filled the hungry soul with good.

They who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death,
Being bound in affliction and iron,—
Because they had rebelled against the words of God,
And reviled the counsel of the Most High:
So that he humbled their heart with travail;
They stumbled, and there was none to help—
Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble,
And he saved them out of their distresses.
He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death,
And brake their bands in sunder.
Oh let these give thanks unto the Lord for his goodness,
And for his wonderful works to the children of men!
For he hath broken the gates of brass,
And cut the bars of iron in sunder.

Sick men because of their transgression,
And because of their iniquities, are afflicted;
Their soul abhorreth all manner of food;
And they draw near unto the gates of death;
Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble,
And he saveth them out of their distresses.
He sendeth his word, and healeth them,
And delivereth them from their graves.
Oh let these give thanks unto the Lord for his goodness,
And for his wonderful works to the children of men!
And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving,
And declare his works with rejoicing.

They that go down to the sea in ships,
That do business on the great waters;
These have seen the works of the Lord,
And his wonders in the deep.

For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind,
  Which lifteth up the waves:
They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths:
  Their soul is melted because of trouble.
They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man,
  And all their craft faileth them.
    Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble,
      And he bringeth them out of their distresses.
He turneth the storm into a calm,
  So that the waves of the sea are stilled.
Then are they glad because they are quiet;
  That he bringeth them unto their desired haven.
    Oh let these give thanks unto the Lord for his goodness,
      And for his wonderful works to the children of men!
Let them exalt him in the congregation of the people,
  And praise him in the assembly of the elders.

He turneth rivers into a wilderness,
  And watercourses into dry ground;
A fruitful land into barrenness,
  For the wickedness of them that dwell therein.
He turneth the wilderness into a standing water,
  And dry ground into watercourses.
And there he maketh the hungry to dwell,
  That they may found a city for habitation;
And sow the fields, and plant vineyards,
  Which may yield fruits of increase.
He blesseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly;
  And suffereth not their cattle to decrease.
He poureth contempt upon nobles,
  And maketh them to wander astray in pathless deserts,
So that they are diminished and brought low
  By the oppression of evil and sorrow.
But he setteth the poor on high out of affliction,
  And maketh him families like a flock.
The righteous see it, and rejoice:
  And all iniquity stoppeth its mouth.

Whoso is wise, let him observe these things,
  Let him give heed to the lovingkindness of the Lord.

'They who sat in darkness.' It is disputed whether the darkness and the prison are meant literally or metaphorically. Probably the former.

'Sick men.' The sickness, if meant literally, is regarded (however strange it may seem to us) as the punishment of sin. Compare the speech of Elihu in Job (p. 182).

'They that go down.' The Jews are ceasing to be purely agriculturists. They are also traders. How grand is the description of the storm! The commentators aptly compare from Ovid (*Tristia*, i. 2):—

'Me miserum, quanti montes volvuntur aquarum;
Iamiam tacturos sidera summa putes.
Quantae diducto subsidunt aequore valles!
Iamiam tacturas Tartara nigra putes.
Rector in incerto est, nec quid fugiatve petatve
Invenit, ambiguis ars stupet ipsa malis.'

But 'they mount up to the heaven' refers in the Psalm to the sailors, not to the waves.

'He turneth rivers.' Some think that this is a foretelling of what God will do, in the Messianic future, to Israel and to Israel's enemies. Others suppose that 'the hymn of praise for God's manifold deliverances is succeeded by specimens of God's equally manifold providential dealings with countries and nations' (Cheyne). There are many imitations of earlier writers, such as the Second Isaiah.

The closing verse gives the didactic stamp to the whole Psalm. How divine omnipotence is controlled and directed by justice and mercy—such seems to be its burden.

§ 11. *Psalms one hundred and eleven, and one hundred and twelve.*—My last two Psalms in this group hang closely together, but only the second could perhaps properly be called 'didactic.' The first is rather a hymn of praise. Yet they are, as Professor Cheyne calls them, 'twin Psalms,' identical in structure (both being alphabetic on the same method of two letters to a verse) and closely parallel in thought. The first (cxi) praises God for his goodness to Israel, the second (cxii) praises the righteous man whose character and actions reflect, so far as this is within man's power, the actions and character of God. But as God to this Psalmist is in no quite complete sense the equal Father of all, for the 'nations' are somewhat less to him than Israel, so God's worshipper is not conscious of any evil thought in wanting to 'see his desire' upon his enemies, even as they doubtless want to see

their desire upon him. Yet within this limit justice and mercy are the twin virtues that distinguish alike the human nature and the divine. And the weakness which we have noted is capable of easy remedy. Let the national barriers fall, let it once be seen and realized that all men are God's children, that the divine spirit is in man as man, and not in man as Israelite or Gentile, and then it will also be realized that the highest law of the community as of the individual must be to return good for evil.

I will give thanks unto the Lord with my whole heart,
In the assembly and congregation of the upright.
The works of the Lord are great,
To be studied of all that delight therein.
His work is magnificent and glorious:
And his righteousness endureth for ever.
He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered:
The Lord is gracious and full of compassion.
He hath given food unto them that fear him:
He will ever be mindful of his covenant.
He hath shewed his people the power of his works,
In that he gave them the heritage of the nations.
The works of his hands are faithfulness and justice;
All his commandments are trustworthy.
They stand fast for ever and ever,
And are done in faithfulness and uprightness.
He sent deliverance unto his people:
He hath commanded his covenant for ever:
Holy and reverend is his name.
The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom:
A good insight have all they that do his commandments:
His praise endureth for ever.

'He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered.' More literally, 'A memorial has he made for his wonderful works': i. e. 'He has made his deeds an everlasting monument of his omnipotence' (Wellhausen).

'He hath commanded his covenant for ever,' i. e. to endure for ever. 'At one time the heathen meant to abolish the Jewish ordinances, which they deemed absurd; the greater part of the Jews also doubted whether their Law was destined to hold good for ever. The Law appeared to be then in imminent danger. But it was firmly re-established through the *deliverance* (from the heathen) which Jehovah *sent* (by the Maccabees, 167 B.C.).' Wellhausen's note.

Happy is the man that feareth the Lord,
That delighteth greatly in his commandments.
His seed shall be mighty upon earth:
The generation of the upright shall be blessed.
Substance and riches shall be in his house:
And his righteousness endureth for ever.
As a light in darkness he dawneth unto the upright:
He is gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous. (?)
Well is it with the man who sheweth pity and lendeth,
Who manageth his affairs with justice. (?)
For he shall not be moved for ever:
The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance.
He shall not be afraid of evil tidings:
His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord.
His heart is established, he shall not be afraid,
Until he see his desire upon his enemies.
He hath dispersed, he hath given to the poor;
His righteousness endureth for ever;
His horn is exalted with glory.
The wicked see it, and is grieved;
He gnasheth with his teeth, and melteth away;
The desire of the wicked shall perish.

'That delighteth greatly in his commandments.' Such from the time of the Psalmist and up till now has been the Jewish conception of piety. The truly religious man fulfils the commandments of God not from compulsion, not from terror, but because he believes them to be good, ordered by Divine Goodness for beneficent ends, because he finds in them his purest satisfaction, his holiest delight. And it may be safely asserted that there have been in every generation from the time of the Psalmist a number of pious Jews whose lives answered to this ideal, who have greatly delighted in the commandments of God. And the ideal is still good and true. What God's commandments are we may interpret somewhat differently from the mediaeval Rabbi. They are not to us the commandments, be they moral, be they ritual, of a particular book. They are the moral law, which is indeed partly contained in a book, but which in its fullness is greater than any book—that moral ideal, law and aspiration in one, which is seen clearer, and realized more fully and purely, as humanity advances with painful and faltering steps in the path of progress and of enlightenment, but which exists, consummate and complete from eternity and to eternity, as the very being of God.

CHAPTER IX

THE PRAISE OF THE LAW

§ 1. *The one hundred and nineteenth Psalm: 'Beati immaculati.'*—There are two Psalms in the Psalter which might reasonably be included in the 'didactic' group, but which from their special subject and character are perhaps justifiably treated in a chapter to themselves.

They are devoted to the Law and sing its praises. The whole Psalter probably dates from a period when the Law was gradually becoming a dominant force in the religious life of Israel. The Psalter may indeed be regarded as the joint product of the Prophets and the Law. The Law is the constant condition on which the spiritual life of the Psalmist depends. But not many Psalms directly mention it; it is, as it were, taken for granted; the services of the Temple constitute a considerable proportion of its subject-matter, and without the Temple a large proportion of the Psalms would be unintelligible. Nor must we limit too precisely the meaning of the word *Law* or *Torah*, as used in the two Psalms which hymn its perfections. In the first place *Torah* has not lost its old meaning of 'teaching,' and it can be used to indicate the teaching of God as available and recorded in written words. And therefore, in the second place, *Torah* or Law need not necessarily be limited to the Pentateuch, but may include all sacred Scripture recognized and accepted as embodying the Divine Will. The Law is God's will as expressed in words.

Of the two Psalms which form the present chapter one (cxix) is the longest in the Psalter. Eight successive verses begin with the same letter of the alphabet, so that, as there are in Hebrew twenty-two letters, there are in this Psalm no less than 176 verses. It is apparently the *moral* ordinances of the Law which the Psalmist sets himself to praise. These are the 'commandments,' the 'statutes,' the 'testimonies,' the 'judgements,' the 'words,' the 'ways,' which are mentioned in almost every verse. The writer frequently

identifies himself with Israel or with the pious in Israel; sometimes again more individual references are discernible. The date of the Psalm is tolerably clear and certain. For it contains obvious 'traces of that internal struggle of growing intensity' between the Hellenists and the strict followers of the Law which preceded the persecutions of Antiochus Epiphanes.

The religious value of the Psalm has been variously estimated. There is little connexion of thought or sequence of ideas. There is much repetition, and the elaborate mechanism of the acrostic gives a certain stiffness and artificiality to the whole. Yet fine thoughts shine through; and beneath a formal framework and ceaseless verbal iterations, which make one think that it would have been all the same to the writer whether the alphabet contained twenty letters or a hundred, there are sometimes discernible the eager passion and the spiritual rapture of a true religious believer.

Mr. Ker in his admirable book, *The Psalms in History and Biography*, from which I have frequently quoted already, observes that Psalm cxix 'might supply of itself endless incidents, from which only some can be given.

'Mr. Spurgeon quotes two from men of different temperament. In the midst of a London season, and in the stir and turmoil of a political crisis, 1819, William Wilberforce writes in his diary: "Walked from Hyde Park Corner repeating Psalm cxix in great comfort." And again John Ruskin in *Fors Clavigera*: "It is strange that of all the pieces of the Bible which my mother taught me, that which cost me most to learn, and which was to my child's mind most repulsive, Psalm cxix, has now become, of all, the most precious to me in its overflowing and glorious passion of love for the law of God."

'There is frequent reference to the Psalm in the diary of Henry Martyn: "Found some devotion in learning a part of Psalm cxix." "In the evening grew better by reading Psalm cxix, which generally brings me into a spiritual frame of mind." "Again in a fretful frame; it was not till I learned some of Psalm cxix that I could return to a proper spirit."

'It drew to it the special admiration of Pascal, who, as his sister Madame Périer says, often spoke with such feeling about it "that he seemed transported," "*qu'il paraissait hors de lui-même.*"'

The *Four Friends* justly say of this Psalm: 'If we would fathom the depth of meaning in the written Law of Israel, if we would measure the elevation of soul, the hope, the confidence even before princes and kings, which pious Jews derived from it, we must turn to this Psalm. Here is an epitome of all true

religion as conceived by the best spirits of the time. To such a loving study and meditation on the Law, the alphabetical arrangement is not inappropriate, and if the poem be necessarily somewhat cramped, it is nevertheless pervaded by the glow of love and abounds in spiritual life.'

א ALEPH.

Happy are they whose way is blameless,
  Who walk in the law of the Lord.
Happy are they that keep his testimonies,
  And that seek him with their whole heart;
Who do no iniquity:
  And walk in his ways.
Thou hast ordained thy precepts,
  That we should keep them diligently.
O that my ways were directed
  To keep thy statutes!
Then shall I not be ashamed,
  When I have respect unto all thy commandments.
I will give thanks unto thee with uprightness of heart,
  When I shall have learned thy righteous ordinances.
I will keep thy statutes:
  O forsake me not utterly.

ב BETH.

Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?
  By taking heed thereto according to thy word.
With my whole heart have I sought thee:
  O let me not wander from thy commandments.
Thy word have I hid in mine heart,
  That I might not sin against thee.
Blessed art thou, O Lord:
  Teach me thy statutes.
With my lips have I declared
  All the ordinances of thy mouth.
I rejoice in the way of thy testimonies,
  Above all riches.
I will meditate in thy precepts,
  And have respect unto thy ways.
I will delight myself in thy statutes:
  I will not forget thy word.

ג GIMEL.

Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live,
And keep thy word.
Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold
Wondrous things out of thy law.
I am a stranger in the earth:
Hide not thy commandments from me.
My soul is crushed with longing
For thine ordinances at all times.
Thou abhorrest the proud,
Who do err from thy commandments.
Remove from me reproach and contempt;
For I have kept thy testimonies.
Though princes sit and speak against me,
Thy servant museth on thy statutes.
Thy testimonies also are my delight,
And thy statutes my counsellors.

ד DALETH.

My soul cleaveth unto the dust:
Quicken thou me according to thy word.
I have declared my ways, and thou heardest me:
Teach me thy statutes.
Make me to understand the way of thy precepts:
So will I meditate on thy wondrous works.
My soul melteth for sorrow:
Strengthen thou me according unto thy word.
Remove from me the way of falsehood:
And be gracious unto me with thy law.
I have chosen the way of faithfulness;
Thine ordinances have I set before me.
I have stuck unto thy testimonies:
O Lord, put me not to shame.
In the way of thy commandments I take pleasure;
For thou dost enlarge my heart.

ה HE.

Teach me, O Lord, the way of thy statutes;
And I will keep it as a reward. (?)
Give me understanding, and I will keep thy law;
Yea, I will observe it with my whole heart.

Make me to go in the path of thy commandments;
For therein do I delight.
Incline my heart unto thy testimonies,
And not to covetousness.
Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity;
And quicken thou me in thy way.
Stablish unto thy servant thy word,
Which leadeth unto thy fear.
Turn away my reproach which I fear:
For thine ordinances are good.
Behold, I long after thy precepts:
Quicken me through thy righteousness.

ו VAU.

Let thy lovingkindness come unto me, O Lord,
Even thy salvation, according to thy word.
So shall I have wherewith to answer him that reproacheth me:
For I trust wholly in thy word.
And take not the word of truth out of my mouth;
For I have hoped in thy judgements.
So shall I keep thy law continually
For ever and ever.
And I shall walk at large:
For I seek thy precepts.
And I will speak of thy testimonies before kings,
And will not be ashamed.
And I will delight myself in thy commandments,
Which I have loved.
My hands also will I lift up unto thy commandments;
And I will meditate on thy statutes.

ז ZAIN.

Remember thy word unto thy servant,
Seeing that thou hast caused me to hope.
This is my comfort in my affliction:
For thy word hath quickened me.
The proud have me greatly in derision:
Yet have I not declined from thy law.
I remember thine ordinances of old, O Lord;
And I comfort myself.

Burning zeal hath taken hold upon me because of the wicked
That forsake thy law.
Thy statutes have been my songs
In the house of my pilgrimage.
I have remembered thy name, O Lord, in the night,
And have kept thy law.
This hath been my good,
That I have kept thy precepts.

ח CHETH.

This is my portion, O Lord:
That I may keep thy words.
I intreat thy favour with my whole heart:
Be merciful unto me according to thy word.
I have thought on my ways,
And turned my feet unto thy testimonies.
I have made haste, and delayed not
To keep thy commandments.
The bands of the wicked have surrounded me:
But I have not forgotten thy law.
At midnight I will rise to give thanks unto thee
Because of thy righteous ordinances.
I am a companion of all them that fear thee,
And of them that keep thy precepts.
The earth, O Lord, is full of thy lovingkindness:
Teach me thy statutes.

ט TETH.

Thou hast dealt well with thy servant,
O Lord, according to thy word.
Teach me insight and knowledge:
For I trust in thy commandments.
Before I was afflicted I went astray:
But now I keep thy word.
Thou art good, and doest good;
Teach me thy statutes.
The proud have forged a lie against me:
But I will keep thy precepts with my whole heart.
Their heart is as fat as grease;
But I delight in thy law.

It is good for me that I have been afflicted,
That I might learn thy statutes.
The law of thy mouth is better unto me
Than thousands of gold and silver.

י JOD.

Thy hands have made me and fashioned me:
Give me understanding, that I may learn thy commandments.
Let them that fear thee be glad when they see me;
Because I have hoped in thy word.
I know, O Lord, that thy judgements are right,
And that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me.
Let, I pray thee, thy lovingkindness be for my comfort,
According to thy word unto thy servant.
Let thy tender mercies come unto me, that I may live:
For thy law is my delight.
Let the proud be ashamed; for they oppress me without a cause:
But I will meditate on thy precepts.
Let those that fear thee turn unto me,
And they shall know thy testimonies. (?)
Let my heart be sound in thy statutes;
That I be not ashamed.

כ CAPH.

My soul fainteth for thy salvation:
I hope in thy word.
Mine eyes fail for thy word;
When wilt thou comfort me?
For I am become like a wine-skin in the smoke;
Yet do I not forget thy statutes.
How many are the days of thy servant?
When wilt thou execute judgement on them that persecute me?
The proud have digged pits for me,
Who are not after thy law.
All thy commandments are faithful:
Falsely do they persecute me; help thou me.
They had almost consumed me upon earth;
But I forsook not thy precepts.

Quicken me after thy lovingkindness;
So shall I keep the testimony of thy mouth.

ל LAMED.

Thy word, O Lord, endureth for ever;
It is fixed as the heaven.
Thy faithfulness is unto all generations:
Thou hast established the earth, and it abideth.
They continue this day according to thine ordinances:
For all are thy servants.
Unless thy law had been my delight,
I should have perished in mine affliction.
I will never forget thy precepts:
For with them thou hast kept me alive.
I am thine, save me;
For I have sought thy precepts.
The wicked have waited for me to destroy me:
But I consider thy testimonies.
I have seen an end to all perfection:
But thy commandment is exceeding broad.

מ MEM.

O how I love thy law!
It is my meditation all the day.
Thy commandment maketh me wiser than mine enemies:
For it is mine for ever.
I have more discernment than all my teachers:
For thy testimonies are my meditation.
I understand more than the aged,
Because I keep thy precepts.
I have refrained my feet from every evil way,
That I might keep thy word.
I have not departed from thy judgements:
For thou hast taught me.
How sweet are thy words unto my taste!
Yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth!
Through thy precepts I get understanding:
Therefore I hate every false way.

נ NUN.

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet,
And a light unto my path.

I have sworn, and I will perform it,
That I will keep thy righteous judgements.
I am afflicted very much:
Quicken me, O Lord, according unto thy word.
Accept, I beseech thee, the freewill offerings of my mouth, O Lord,
And teach me thine ordinances.
My life is continually in my hand:
Yet do I not forget thy law.
The wicked have laid a snare for me:
Yet have I not erred from thy precepts.
Thy testimonies have I taken as an heritage for ever:
For they are the rejoicing of my heart.
I have inclined mine heart to perform thy statutes;
Their reward endureth for ever.

ס SAMECH.

I hate the double-minded; (?)
But thy law do I love.
Thou art my hiding place and my shield:
I hope in thy word.
Depart from me, ye evildoers:
For I will keep the commandments of my God.
Uphold me according unto thy word, that I may live:
And let me not be ashamed of my hope.
Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe:
And I will have delight in thy statutes continually.
Thou rejectest all them that err from thy statutes:
For their deceit is vain.
I account all the wicked of the earth like dross:
Therefore I love thy testimonies.
My flesh shuddereth for fear of thee;
And I am afraid of thy judgements.

ע AIN.

I have done judgement and justice:
Leave me not to mine oppressors.
Be surety for thy servant for good:
Let not the proud oppress me.
Mine eyes fail for thy salvation,
And for thy righteous promise.

Deal with thy servant according to thy lovingkindness,
And teach me thy statutes.
I am thy servant; give me understanding,
That I may know thy testimonies.
It is time for thee, Lord, to work:
For they have made void thy law.
Therefore I love thy commandments
Above gold, yea, above fine gold.
Therefore I have chosen thy precepts;
And I hate every false way.

ב PE.

Thy testimonies are wonderful:
Therefore doth my soul keep them.
The unfolding of thy words giveth light; (?)
It giveth understanding unto the simple.
I open my mouth, and pant:
For I long for thy commandments.
Look thou upon me, and be merciful unto me,
As is just unto those that love thy name.
Establish my steps in thy word:
And let not any iniquity have dominion over me.
Deliver me from the oppression of man:
So will I keep thy precepts.
Make thy face to shine upon thy servant;
And teach me thy statutes.
Rivers of waters run down mine eyes,
Because they keep not thy law.

צ TZADDI.

Righteous art thou, O Lord,
And upright are thy judgements.
Thy testimonies that thou hast commanded are righteous
And very faithful.
My zeal hath consumed me,
Because mine enemies have forgotten thy words.
Thy word is very pure:
Therefore thy servant loveth it.
I am small and despised:
Yet do not I forget thy precepts.

Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness,
And thy law is truth.
Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me:
Thy commandments are my delight.
Thy testimonies are righteous for ever;
Give me understanding, and I shall live.

ק KOPH.

I have cried with my whole heart: hear me, O Lord,
I will keep thy statutes.
I cry unto thee: save me,
That I may keep thy testimonies.
I forestall the dawn, and cry;
I hope in thy word.
Mine eyes forestall the night watches,
That I may meditate on thy word.
Hear my voice according unto thy lovingkindness:
O Lord, quicken me according to thine ordinances.
My persecutors draw near in malice;
They are far from thy law.
Thou art near, O Lord;
And all thy commandments are truth.
Long since have I known from thy testimonies
That thou hast founded them for ever.

ר RESH.

Behold mine affliction, and deliver me:
For I do not forget thy law.
Plead my cause, and deliver me:
Quicken me according to thy word.
Salvation is far from the wicked:
For they seek not thy statutes.
Great are thy tender mercies, O Lord:
Quicken me according to thy judgements.
Many are my persecutors and mine enemies;
I have not swerved from thy testimonies.
I see the transgressors, and I loathe them,
Because they keep not thy word.
Consider how I love thy precepts:
Quicken me, O Lord, according to thy lovingkindness.

The sum of thy words is truth;
And every one of thy righteous ordinances endureth for ever.

ש SHIN.

Princes have persecuted me without a cause:
But my heart standeth in awe of thy word.
I rejoice at thy word,
As one that findeth great spoil.
I hate and abhor lying:
But thy law do I love.
Seven times a day do I praise thee
Because of thy righteous ordinances.
Great peace have they who love thy law:
And for them there is no stumbling-block.
Lord, I have hoped for thy salvation,
And done thy commandments.
My soul hath kept thy testimonies;
Yea, I have loved them exceedingly.
I have kept thy precepts and thy testimonies:
For all my ways are before thee.

ת TAU.

Let my cry come near before thee, O Lord:
Quicken me according to thy word.
Let my supplication come before thee:
Deliver me according to thy word.
My lips shall pour forth praise,
For thou teachest me thy statutes.
My tongue shall speak of thy word:
For all thy commandments are righteousness.
Let thine hand help me;
For I have chosen thy precepts.
I have longed for thy salvation, O Lord;
And thy law is my delight.
Let my soul live, and it shall praise thee;
And let thine ordinances help me.
I wander like a lost sheep; seek thy servant,
For I do not forget thy commandments.

I cannot attempt anything like a commentary on this long Psalm. Most of it happily is quite easy. Just a few verses seem to call for special remark.

(Aleph) 'Happy are they that keep his testimonies.' 'Testimonies' might perhaps better be rendered 'decrees' or 'exhortations.'

(Gimel) 'Wondrous things out of thy Law.' We may note the beginning of the Rabbinical conception that every sentence and letter of the Law was full of deep spiritual meaning, only to be discovered by prolonged investigation and divine help.

'Though princes sit and speak against me.' The writer sometimes speaks in his own person, and sometimes identifies himself (as here) with the pious community of Israel.

(Daleth) 'Quicken me according to thy word.' A constantly recurring prayer. The Psalmist, as the spokesman of faithful Israel, is outworn by the pressure of adversity. He prays for both outward and inward strengthening and revival.

(He) 'And I will keep it as a reward.' A fine thought, if the text be sound and its rendering accurate. The keeping of the Law is its own reward.

And this indeed we notice throughout the Psalm: to 'study' the Scriptures and to live the life which they enjoin—these are the highest blessings and the supremest privilege which the Psalmist knows. Outward prosperity seems desired as a proof of God's justice, as an evidence of his love which shall be patent to all the world, rather than as a good in itself to those who enjoy it. To them, both in fair days and foul, the Law with all which it implies is and ever will be the *summum bonum*, the supreme good.

(Zain) 'In the house of my pilgrimage': that is, upon the earth.

(Teth) 'Before I was afflicted.' There may be here an individual, as there is certainly a national reference. Is the allusion to the early days of the Syrian persecutions, which checked the growing inroads of Hellenism and infused new life into Judaism? Yet the Psalm can hardly have been written so late. The highest use of sorrow is indicated in these lines. Man's noblest is evoked by suffering.

(Jod) 'In faithfulness hast thou afflicted me.' Israel needed affliction for its own spiritual regeneration. In order that the divine promises to Israel might be fully realized, the bracing influence of sorrow was needful. Hence the Psalmist realizes that the afflictions of his community, in which he too has suffered, were the outcome of God's fidelity to Israel and to himself. And the thought can easily be expanded. In this grand and simple line lies the true explanation, as we may humbly trust, of much human woe.

(Lamed) 'Unless thy Law had been my delight.' No single statement could more accurately sum up the reason how and why the Jews have been preserved through ages of persecution. One could expand that text into a long narrative. But a variant will also hold good, and we in England should remember it. 'Unless thy Law be my delight, I shall perish in my prosperity.'

The higher spiritual life prevented persecution causing either degradation or dissolution. The Jews were not only preserved by their fidelity to a religious cause, but ennobled by it. Their lives were one long voluntary sacrifice. Religion supplied to them the place of all other goods, whether spiritual or material. They had no art, no citizenship, and scarcely any science which was not merely ancillary to theology. But religion was their citizenship, their art and their science; they sharpened their wits by its study; they fed their imaginations by its hopes and visions; by its ordinances and obligations they kept their lives clean and their hearts pure and brave. Prosperity has its dangers no less than adversity; these dangers are even more corrosive and corrupting. Will religion keep us free from these? No race or community is more liable to ethical disintegration when the ennobling influence of religion is removed than the Jews. Unless religion be our stay and our delight, we shall degenerate and fall to pieces.

'An end to all perfection.' Again a notable saying, if the Hebrew words will bear the English interpretation. 'All earthly perfection has a boundary, and is therefore limited: only God's law is unlimited in its contents and its value' (Baethgen).

(Mem) 'More discernment than all my teachers.' A difficult verse. It is probably ironical, the reference being to the new Grecian 'wisdom,' which the Psalmist regards as dross compared with the fine gold of true religion. His 'enemies' are the Grecian party among the Jews, who aped the manners, the shallow wisdom and the superficial enlightenment of their Hellenized masters. 'They regarded the Law as antiquated, and preached Culture and Emancipation' (Wellhausen).

(Nun) 'My life is continually in my hand,' i.e. I am in constant danger. The speaker identifies himself with his community.

(Samech) 'The double-minded.' 'That is, sceptics or doubters. The Hebrew word (*Se'iphim*) (which should probably be pronounced *so'phim*) was perhaps chosen because of its phonetic resemblance to the Greek *Sophoi*' (wise men) (Wellhausen). 'Who are the *se'iphim*?' says the Midrash. 'They are those who acquire the fear of God from their sufferings, and do not obey from love. But David (i.e. the author of the Psalm) said, Not from

compulsion and not from fear, but from love [do I serve God], as it is written, But thy Law do I love.'

(Ain) 'They have made void thy Law.' The allusion apparently is to the growing number of Jews who, under Hellenistic influences, neglected the strict performance of the ritual, and sometimes also of the moral injunctions of the Law.

(Koph) 'Thou art near, O Lord.' Israel's enemies may be near, but the Psalmist knows that God is nearer. Therefore he never loses hope.

(Shin) 'Great peace have they.' No outward peace is meant, for the Psalmist speaks of persecution and enmity, but the inward peace of the soul—the peace of God. So too as to the 'stumbling-block.' It refers to the difficulties of religion: the prosperity of the wicked and the calamities of the righteous. Over these the lovers of the Law rise superior. They feel and know 'that all is well.'

(Tau) 'I wander like a lost sheep.' Israel apparently is meant, who was still scattered over many a land.

As to the tenses of the Psalm, they usually can either be translated by the present or by the perfect: e. g. either 'I love' or 'I have loved.' They signify a state of continuance, which reaches back into the past and will go on into the future.

The apparent 'self-righteousness' of the Psalm must be judged by considerations which have been already indicated. The Psalmist speaks not merely for himself, but for the true Israel, of whom he is one, which as a matter of fact did try to live according to the Law, which as a matter of fact did find in the Law its highest good, and which as a matter of fact was content, for the sake of that Law, to suffer and to die. It would be unjust to the writer to accuse him of boasting, or to suppose that he believed that he, his friends and his party, had reached the limits of moral well-being.

The frequent petitions to God for understanding and for help in order that his Law may be kept more perfectly show that the Psalmist was very far from thinking himself (or Israel) morally flawless. He asks from God more than external deliverance. If he follows after the divine word, it is that very 'word' which sheds the light by the help of which he walks. His strength and his goodness are not wholly his own; even such as they are, they are God-given.

§ 2. *The nineteenth Psalm: 'Coeli enarrant.'*—The second of the two Psalms which glorify the Law is joined on to a beautiful fragment which celebrates the glory of God in the heavens. The praise of God in nature is succeeded by the praise of God as revealed to man. Originally the two portions

of this Psalm (xix) must have been distinct; they are written in different metres, and there is no real connexion between the first part and the second. But *perhaps* one and the same man wrote the second part and prefixed the first part to it. Did he desire to supplement the praise of God's glory in nature by praising the glory of the divine law? Or was it only 'by an afterthought that the two parts of the Psalm were brought into relation, the Sun being regarded as a type of the Law of God?' The commentators aptly compare the great saying of Kant, that there were only two things which were a perpetual marvel to him: the starry heavens 'above' and the moral law 'within.'

The heavens declare the glory of God;
And the firmament telleth his handiwork.
Day poureth forth speech unto day,
And night proclaimeth knowledge unto night.
(There is no speech, neither are there words;
Their voice cannot be heard.)
Their voice hath gone out through all the earth,
And their words to the end of the world.—
In them hath he set a tent for the sun.
And he, as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber,
Rejoiceth, as a mighty man, to run his course.
His going forth is from one end of the heaven,
And his circuit unto the ends of it;
And there is nothing hid from his heat.

* * *

The Law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul:
The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.
The statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart:
The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes.
The Fear of the Lord is pure, enduring for ever:
The ordinances of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether.
More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold:
Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

Moreover by them is thy servant warned:
And in keeping of them there is great reward.

As for errors—who can mark them?
Absolve thou me from hidden faults.
Spare thy servant from the proud:
Let them not have dominion over me:
Then shall I be blameless,
And I shall be guiltless of great transgression.
Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart
be acceptable in thy sight,
O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

'Day poureth forth speech.' The idea is that one day tells to another day what it has to say. There is a constant vocal stream of divine glory poured on from day to day and from night to night. Wellhausen, however, would interpret: 'The blue vault tells it by day, the starry heavens teach it by night.'

'There is no speech.' This, the most probable rendering of the Hebrew, would appear to mean that there is no *real* speech; the voice of the heavens, though real, is yet inarticulate. Some scholars hold that such an intimation that an obvious metaphor is not to be taken literally can only be regarded as a gloss. Might one perhaps suppose that the Psalmist meant to suggest that the teaching of the heavens could only be apprehended by the inner ear? To those whose inner ear is closed they say nothing; sun and stars are merely spots which shine or twinkle. The translation of the Authorized Version, 'There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard,' cannot be got from the Hebrew.

'In them hath he set.' 'In them' does not refer to any of the words which precede. 'A clause seems to have fallen out which mentioned the antipodean world, the waters of the ocean where the sun spends the night' (Wellhausen).

'As a bridegroom.' So vigorous and joyful.

'The fear of the Lord.' Apparently this phrase means here *true religion*, of which the 'fear of the Lord' is the basis.

'As for errors.' The writer here alludes to any infractions of the law due to heedlessness; while 'hidden faults' are those committed in ignorance. The ritual as well as the moral law seems included.

Addison, in No. 399 of the *Spectator*, finds a fuller meaning in this verse. He regards it as a prayer against hypocrisy—'that hypocrisy by which a man does not only deceive the world, but very often imposes on himself; that hypocrisy which conceals his own heart from him, and makes him believe he is more virtuous than he really is, and either not attend to his vices, or mistakes

even his vices for virtues. It is this fatal hypocrisy and self-deceit which is taken notice of in those words: Who can understand his errors? Cleanse thou me from secret faults.'

I may here add the fine paraphrase which Addison, in a later number of the *Spectator* (465), gives of the first verses of our Psalm.

> The spacious firmament on high,
> With all the blue ethereal sky
> And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
> Their great Original proclaim:
> Th' unwearied sun, from day to day,
> Does his Creator's power display,
> And publishes to every land
> The work of an Almighty Hand.
>
> Soon as the evening shades prevail,
> The moon takes up the wondrous tale,
> And nightly to the listening earth
> Repeats the story of her birth:
> Whilst all the stars that round her burn,
> And all the planets in their turn,
> Confirm the tidings as they roll,
> And spread the truth from pole to pole.
>
> What though, in solemn silence, all
> Move round the dark terrestrial ball?
> What though no real voice, nor sound
> Amid their radiant orbs be found?
> In reason's ear they all rejoice,
> And utter forth a glorious voice,
> For ever singing, as they shine,
> 'The Hand that made us is Divine.'

'The proud.' This prayer may mean that the Psalmist fears that, if the proud apostates gain the upper hand, he and his friends may become guilty of anger and revenge. Or (more probably) it may mean: If the apostates rule and set the tone, even true believers may be forced or tempted to break the law. 'The Psalmist prays to be saved from the oppression of the proud and godless, lest he should be tempted even to deny God. Cp. Psalm cxix, *Ain*; and note how often "the proud" are mentioned in that Psalm, and how the thought of faithfulness to the Law in the teeth of mockery and persecution is emphasized' (Kirkpatrick).

'Then shall I be blameless,' may mean 'Then shall I continue to be blameless,' or 'Then shall I not fall into sin.' Another interpretation explains the 'I' more strictly as Israel. So Wellhausen: 'The *Arrogant* are the heathen; the *Servant* is Israel. If the heathen bear rule, this is a proof of Israel's guilt; if the reverse be the case, Israel knows itself to be righteous before God, and *free from gross transgression*.'

There seems a certain scrupulosity in this short Psalm respecting the keeping of the law which was absent from Psalm cxix. And this undoubtedly was sometimes an evil effect of the rule of the Law that for the commoner order of minds it tended to split up goodness into separate fragments, to each of which an equal value might be assigned. Thus a mere ritual ordinance could be co-ordinated with the supreme maxims of morality. In other cases the conscience became uneasy; the possibility of 'hidden faults' harassed the soul. A man is not likely to develop a free big nature if he is over anxious; he will not become nobly good if he thinks too often whether he have stepped an inch on this side of the 'strait pathway' or on that. But, on the other hand, the Psalm shows us also the strength of the Law. Men loved it and rejoiced in it. Its rule was a rule of joy; its service was freely rendered. *In* the keeping of it there was great reward. And this was the predominant experience as well as the predominant belief of the Rabbis about the Law. They felt about the Law what Ben Sira felt about wisdom. 'Bring thy feet into her fetters, and thy neck into her chain. Put thy shoulder under her, and bear her, and be not grieved with her bonds. Come unto her with all thy soul, and keep her ways with thy whole power. Search and seek, and she shall be made known unto thee; and when thou hast got hold of her, let her not go. For at the last thou shalt find her rest; and she shall be turned for thee into gladness. And her fetters shall be to thee for a covering of strength, and her chains for a robe of glory. For there is a golden ornament upon her, and her bands are a riband of blue. Thou shalt put her on as a robe of glory, and shalt array thee with her as a crown of rejoicing.' Let none of my readers believe a word of it if they read in non-Jewish books that the Law was a burden and a bondage. That is historically false. Outsiders can only discern the fetters and the chain; but to the immense majority of those who wore them they were transfigured into the robe of glory and the crown of joy.

CHAPTER X

PSALMS OF PRAISE

§ 1. *The twenty-ninth Psalm: 'Afferte Domino.'*—My last group of Psalms is now before us. It is the group containing those Psalms which praise in various ways and for various reasons the goodness and glory of God. And among these I will place first two or three beautiful Psalms which sing the praise of God in nature, and so link on to the first part of the nineteenth Psalm with which our last group ended.

My first Psalm in this group celebrates the majesty of God as revealed in the storm. To all races thunder and lightning have seemed to be the special operation of the divine powers, but to the Psalmist the sensuous images which he applies to God are consciously metaphorical. Some scholars believe that this twenty-ninth Psalm was imitated by the writer of the ninety-sixth.

It is, however, by no means certain that the Psalm is merely a description of a storm and of the marvels of nature. It is quite possible that, like the 'accession Psalms,' the song now before us celebrates the great 'judgement' which marks the opening of the Messianic age. The storm is the prelude to the Divine Assize which is to follow. Finally, God takes his seat as supreme sovereign and judge. Israel will at last be rescued from all its troubles.

Give unto the Lord, O ye sons of God,
Give unto the Lord glory and strength.
Give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name;
Worship the Lord in hallowed array.

The voice of the Lord is upon the waters:
The God of glory thundereth:
The Lord is upon great waters.
The voice of the Lord is powerful;
The voice of the Lord is full of majesty.

The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars;
  Yea, the Lord breaketh the cedars of Lebanon.
He maketh them also to skip like a calf;
  Lebanon and Sirion like a wild ox in its youth.
The voice of the Lord cleaveth [the rocks];
  [The voice of the Lord sendeth forth] flames of fire.
The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness;
  The Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.
The voice of the Lord pierceth the oaks,
  And strippeth the forest bare:
  But in his temple every one saith: Glory!
The Lord sat enthroned at the Flood;
  Yea, the Lord sitteth as king for ever.
The Lord will give strength to his people,
  The Lord will bless his people with peace.

'Sons of God' are the angels. The thunderstorm comes up from the sea.

'Cleaveth the rocks.' Some words seem to have fallen out: those in brackets are supplied conjecturally by Wellhausen.

'The Lord sat enthroned at the Flood.' A difficult verse, which, as Professor Cheyne has shown, is capable of four different translations. As rendered above, the meaning must be, God showed or revealed his kingship at the Flood, and God has continued his kingship from then till now, and will continue it for all time to come. But the whole reference to the story of the Flood is very sudden and inappropriate. Professor Cheyne thinks the Hebrew word *mabul* can be here translated 'storm,' and translates: 'At the storm the Lord sat enthroned; the Lord is enthroned as king for ever'; and Professor Wellhausen, who adopts the idea of the grand assize, renders: 'The Lord has taken his judgement-seat to bring on a deluge, and as king he is throned to all eternity.'

'The Lord will bless his people with peace.' After a storm comes the calm: true in 'nature' and true in human life and experience. The storm may even give birth to peace: it may, as we say, 'clear the air'; and the greater the storm, the greater the peace. And the storm may strengthen. It may give knowledge. We may learn to 'know the Lord' through tempest; to render to the Divine Ruler the 'glory due unto his name.'

§ 2. *The eighth Psalm: 'Domine, Dominus noster.'*—With Psalms xix and xxix the commentators frequently associate Psalm viii, which connects nature with man. To the vastness and majesty of nature such a frail creature as man would seem

to stand in contrast. Nevertheless it has pleased God that man should be even more wonderful than the greatest works of God's hands. Thus the Psalmist finds in man as the ruler of earth, a further theme in which to celebrate the divine glory. Man is God's best witness and praise. His greatness, not his smallness, testifies to the divine majesty. The Psalmist's point of view should be compared with an opposite conception in the Book of Job, where the hero seems to quote or parody the very words of our Psalmist (p. 137).

O Lord, our Lord,
How glorious is thy name in all the earth!
. . . thy glory upon the heavens.
Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast thou founded a power
Because of thine enemies.
That thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger.

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,
The moon and the stars, which thou hast established,
What is man, that thou art mindful of him,
And the son of man, that thou watchest over him?
For thou hast made him little lower than the angels,
And hast crowned him with glory and honour.

Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands;
Thou hast put all things under his feet:
All sheep and oxen,
Yea, and the beasts of the field;
The birds of the air, and the fish of the sea,
Which pass through the paths of the seas.
O Lord, our Lord,
How glorious is thy name in all the earth!

The Hebrew in the third line is partly untranslatable.

'Out of the mouth,' &c. A most obscure verse. Are the babes real babes or a metaphor (as Professor Cheyne thinks) for 'poor and humble believers'? Israel's praises are an adequate bulwark against the enemy. This seems very dubious; not less so the view that the glory of God is revealed by the inarticulate speech of infants, which is in itself a confutation of those who would deny God. Such a thought seems totally out of place in this

connexion. A baby, with all the promise and potency of manhood or womanhood concealed within it, is indeed a divine marvel, but a clearer expression of such a thought would be necessary when so suddenly introduced. Baethgen would partly combine both interpretations. 'If Israel, and even the youngest and smallest in Israel, proclaim God's praise, this will serve to put an end to paganism which has not yet acknowledged God's glory. Even the heathen will at last not be able to resist the impression of this glory, so revealed to them.' Wellhausen's note runs: 'The continued adoration of God is ensured by the next generation. Enemies trouble themselves in vain.'

Compare with this Psalm the praise of man that falls from the lips of Hamlet: 'What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals!'

The greatness of man is truer than his littleness. For is he not endowed with reason, and capable through reason of knowledge, of beauty and of love?

§ 3. *The one hundred and third Psalm.*—The greatest of the 'Nature Psalms' is the one hundred and fourth. But it cannot be separated from its immediate predecessor, for the two form part of a 'great hymn to providence,' in the first division of which 'the author speaks in the name of Israel, in the second, in that of the world' (Cheyne). Both Psalms have already been quoted in Part I. But they, no less than the few others to be also found there, well deserve repetition. I place Psalm ciii first. It is sometimes argued that the verbs in the first stanza, and the corresponding ones in the second and third, should be rendered in the perfect instead of in the present, and interpreted as referring to some special national deliverance (e.g. the return from Babylon). But more probably the thought is general. Professor Wellhausen says: 'This Psalm does not owe its origin to any particular historical occurrence, but it has an historic background. It is full of thanksgiving for the forgiveness of iniquity, that is, for the deliverance of the community out of great peril, for the renewal of youth in the time of old age.' We are able to give to this exquisite Psalm a meaning still more universal, and to interpret it almost exclusively of the inward or spiritual life of all mankind.

Bless the Lord, O my soul:
And all that is within me, bless his holy name.

Bless the Lord, O my soul,
And forget not all his benefits:
Who forgiveth all thine iniquities;
Who healeth all thy diseases;
Who redeemeth thy life from the pit,
Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies;
Who satisfieth thy desire with good things;
So that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.

The Lord executeth righteousness
And judgement for all that are oppressed.
He made known his ways unto Moses,
His acts unto the children of Israel.
The Lord is merciful and gracious,
Slow to anger, and plenteous in lovingkindness.
He will not always chide:
Neither will he keep his anger for ever.
He doth not deal with us after our sins;
Nor requite us according to our iniquities.

For as the heaven is high above the earth,
So great is his mercy toward them that fear him.
As far as the east is from the west,
So far doth he remove our transgressions from us.
Like as a father pitieth his children,
So the Lord pitieth them that fear him.
For he knoweth our frame;
He remembereth that we are dust.
As for man, his days are as grass:
As a flower of the field, so he blossometh.
When the wind passeth over it—it is gone;
And the place thereof shall know it no more.
But the lovingkindness of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting,
And his righteousness unto children's children;
To such as keep his covenant,
And to those that remember his commandments to do them.

The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens;
And his kingdom ruleth over all.

Bless the Lord, ye his angels,
  Ye mighty in strength, that do his word.
Bless ye the Lord, all ye his hosts;
  Ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.
Bless the Lord, all his works
  In all places of his dominion:
  Bless the Lord, O my soul.

'So that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.' The Hebrew word translated *eagle* is *nesher*, and it seems that the bird is not strictly an eagle at all, but is the Griffon or Great Vulture (*Gyps fulvus*). The verse is commonly explained 'as an allusion to the popular belief of the ancients that the eagle moults in his old age, and renews his feathers' (Cheyne). But Dr. Tristram in his interesting book, *The Natural History of the Bible*, believes that it merely refers to the creature's longevity. In either case there seems a contrast between what is here said, and the description of man's frailty and shortlivedness in stanza three. The explanation must, I suppose, be that in the first stanza the Psalmist is thinking of Israel as a community, which springs up after trouble and calamity to fresh life and vigour, while in the third stanza he is referring to the individuals of whom Israel or any other community is composed. These pass quickly away; the nation abides; it works out the mission which God has given it to accomplish.

§ 4. *The one hundred and fourth Psalm.*—There now follows the magnificent praise of God as the Creator of Nature and as the Spirit who sustains it.

Bless the Lord, O my soul.
  O Lord my God, thou art very great;
  Thou art clothed with splendour and majesty.
He covereth himself with light as with a garment:
  He stretcheth out the heavens like a curtain:
He layeth the beams of his upper chambers in the waters:
  He maketh the clouds his chariot:
  He walketh upon the wings of the wind:
He maketh winds his messengers;
  Flaming fire his ministers.

He set the earth upon its foundations,
  That it should not be moved for ever.
Thou didst cover it with the deep as with a garment:
  The waters stood above the mountains.

At thy rebuke they fled;
  At the voice of thy thunder they hasted away—
The mountains rose, the valleys sank—
  Unto the place which thou hadst founded for them.
Thou didst set a bound that they might not pass over,
  Nor turn again to cover the earth.

He sendeth forth springs into the valleys;
  They run between the hills.
They give drink to every beast of the field;
  The wild asses quench their thirst.
The trees of the Lord are satisfied;
  The cedars of Lebanon which he hath planted.
Where the birds make their nests,
  The stork, whose house is in the fir trees.
Upon them dwell the birds of the heaven,
  They sing among the branches.

The high hills are for the wild goats,
  The rocks are a refuge for the conies.
He watereth the hills from his upper chambers,
  The earth is satisfied with the fruit of thy works.
He causeth grass to sprout for the cattle,
  And herb for the service of man,
  That he may bring forth bread from the earth;
And wine that maketh glad his heart,
  And oil to make his face to shine,
  And bread to strengthen his heart.

He appointed the moon for seasons;
  He causeth the sun to know its going down.
Thou makest darkness, and it is night,
  Wherein all the beasts of the forest do roam.
The young lions roar after their prey,
  And seek their food from God.
The sun riseth, they go back,
  And lay them down in their dens.
Man goeth forth unto his work,
  And to his labour unto the evening.

How manifold are thy works, O Lord!
  In wisdom hast thou made them all:
  The earth is full of thy creatures.

There is the sea, so great and wide and broad,
Therein are things moving innumerable,
Living creatures, both small and great.
There go the ships,
There is Leviathan whom thou hast formed to play therein.
These wait all upon thee,
That thou mayest give them their food in due season.
Thou givest them—they gather;
Thou openest thine hand—they are filled with good;
Thou hidest thy face—they are troubled,
Thou gatherest in their breath—they die,
And turn again to their dust.
Thou sendest forth thy breath, they are created,
And thou renewest the face of the earth.

May the glory of the Lord endure for ever;
May the Lord rejoice in his works!
Who looketh on the earth, and it trembleth,
Who toucheth the mountains, and they smoke!
I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live,
I will make melody to my God while I have my being.
May the sinners be consumed out of the earth,
And may the wicked be no more.
Bless thou the Lord, O my soul.

Parts of the Psalm should be compared with the account of creation in the first chapter of Genesis (Part I, p. 559).

In the second stanza the poet conceives the earth formed and fashioned, but still covered with primaeval waters. As the waters subsided, the mountains appeared above them, and the valleys seemed to sink. The line ('the mountains rose, the valleys sank') is parenthetical.

My friend Mr. Burkitt has suggested an ingenious emendation and correction in this passage of the Psalm which he has allowed me to mention here. He points out that, in accordance with the description in the first chapter of Genesis, a current notion of creation was that the earth was originally covered with waters (the primaeval 'deep'). These waters were partly driven by God into the ocean, and partly pent up above the firmament. Therefore the divine work of creation was not to cover the earth with the deep, but precisely the reverse. Hence, by a small emendation of one Hebrew word, Mr. Burkitt renders:—

He founded earth on its bases,
It shall not be shaken for ever and ever.
The deep as a garment covered it up,
The waters stood upon the mountains.
At thy rebuke they fled;
At the voice of thy thunder they hastened away;
They went up mountains, they went down valleys,
To whatever place thou hast founded for them.

The last distich would then mean that some of the waters rushed up from below, up and beyond the mountain-tops into the sky ('the waters above the firmament'), while others were driven off into the sea.

'Cony' is an old word for rabbit. (It is the same word as the Latin *Cuniculus*, or the German *Kaninchen*.) But the animal meant in the Hebrew is not really a rabbit at all. It does not burrow, but lives in crannies or holes. It is allied to the rhinoceros, but is like a rabbit in size and appearance. The Latin name is *Hierax Syriacus*; it has been called in English the *rock badger*. 'Herbs' 'include all vegetable foods, which, as in the first chapter of Genesis, are regarded as the natural food of the human race. Corn, wine, and oil are the three great products of the soil of Palestine.' 'Service' means 'use.'

In the last stanza the poet remembers that there is one glaring disharmony in God's beautiful world: it is the sinner and his sin. The Psalmist has no philosophical theory or explanation of sin; he only realizes that it is a blot upon the earth. But the sinners whom he has in his mind are presumably the external foes of Israel, and the apostates or indifferentists within the pale. A touch of human anger mingles with his prayer. Contrast the Talmudic story quoted in Part I, p. 601. To the Psalmist the lovingkindness of the Lord is limited to those who keep his covenant, and we ourselves are far from believing that there is not a necessary difference between the good and the bad, whether in this life or in another. The supremest bliss can surely only be known unto the good, whether on earth or beyond the grave. But who is wholly good, and who is wholly bad, and is there not hope for the vilest and the worst? Had the 'good' been born of evil parents and grown up in vile environment, might they not have turned out 'bad'? Not merely or mostly for those who do his commandments, or rather not for them *in so far as* they do his commandments (for who does them all or always?), are God's lovingkindness and pity required. Nay, it is the sinner and the outcast who may claim them. The prayer, 'may the sinners be consumed,' is in contradiction to the statement: 'Who forgiveth all thine iniquities,' for assuredly we are sinners all. And the statement,

'Who forgiveth all thine iniquities,' is to be thus interpreted: at last he will purify thy soul.

'I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live.' Compare the striking close of the striking chapter of Epictetus on Providence (Arrian's *Discourses of Epictetus*, I. xvi): 'If I were a nightingale, I would do the work of a nightingale; if I were a swan, I would do like a swan. But now I am a rational creature, and I ought to praise God: this is my work; I do it, nor will I desert this post, so long as I am allowed to keep it; and I exhort you to join in this same song.'

§ 5. *The sixty-fifth Psalm: 'Te decet hymnus.'*—The following Psalm (lxv) has been placed in this group mainly because of its concluding stanzas. It might equally well have been placed among the Psalms of thanksgiving. But thanksgiving and praise run into each other. Professor Cheyne describes our Psalm as 'a song of praise, composed in the spring, when the "pastures" were already green, the "meadows" clothed with flocks, and the "valleys" covered with swelling corn. Not long before, a great national deliverance (from one of the troubles that befell Judah, say, under Artaxerxes I, 465–425) had probably occurred, but this is not directly mentioned. The most prominent blessings in the mind of the Psalmist are the early and the latter rain.'

Praise is meet for thee, O God, in Zion:
And unto thee let the vow be performed.
O thou that hearest prayer,
Unto thee may all flesh come.

Iniquities prevail against us:
Our transgressions thou wilt purge away.
Happy is the man whom thou choosest,
And causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts:
That we may be satisfied with the goodness of thy house,
Even of thy holy temple.

By terrible things in righteousness dost thou answer us,
O God of our salvation;
Who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth,
And of the islands that are afar;
Who by his strength setteth fast the mountains,
Being girded with power;
Who stilleth the roaring of the seas,
The roaring of their waves, and the tumult of the peoples;

So that they who dwell in the uttermost parts are afraid at thy tokens:
Thou makest the risings of the morning and evening to rejoice.

Thou hast visited the earth, and watered it;
Thou hast greatly enriched it:
With the river of God, which is full of water,
Thou hast prepared them corn.
Thou hast watered the furrows thereof abundantly;
Thou crushest its clods;
Thou hast made it soft with showers;
Thou hast blessed the sprouting thereof.
Thou hast crowned the year of thy goodness;
And thy paths drop with fatness.
Yea, the pastures of the prairie do drop;
And the hills gird themselves with joy,
The meadows are clothed with flocks;
And the valleys are covered over with corn;
They shout for joy, they also sing.

'Iniquities prevail.' A very obscure verse. The tenses are uncertain. If to translate by the present be right, does it mean: Of themselves and by their own weight, our iniquities would be too heavy for us to get rid of. It is thou, O God, who must cancel them, and remit the punishment which is their due. Or should we translate, 'had prevailed,' and 'thou purgest,' or 'hast purged'? And is the meaning then: Our iniquities caused our calamities, but thou hast delivered us of these, and this deliverance betokens the forgiveness of our sins?

'Thy courts.' 'By the "temple" and its "courts" the Psalmist means not merely the temple in Zion, but also that spiritual temple of which the Psalmist had conceived the idea while using to the full the means of grace provided for him in the visible sanctuary. On the other hand, by the "goodness" (i.e. the good things) of God's house, he cannot mean in any degree the meats of the sacrificial feasts; he refers to the blessings common to all the true Israel, as well those of the material as those of the spiritual order' (Cheyne).

'Who art the confidence.' 'The wonderful history of Israel (such is the faith of the Psalmist) has impressed, or is sure to impress, the nations outside first with fear, and then with confidence' (Cheyne).

'Setteth fast the mountains.' 'The God of nature and the God of history are one. There may be also a secondary symbolic reference, the mountains suggesting the colossal power, and the seas the restless character of the world-empires which so often troubled Israel' (Cheyne).

'The river of God.' A mythic survival. The rain was supposed to come from a heavenly ocean or river beyond the sky.

'The year of thy goodness.' 'The fruitful rain promises a rich harvest. Hence the year may already be called a year of God's goodness' (Baethgen).

The Midrash on this Psalm has some pretty thoughts. On the verse, 'Unto thee may all flesh come,' it observes: 'A king of flesh and blood can listen to two or three persons at once but not to everybody, but the Holy One, even though all flesh prays at once, hearkens to the prayer of each. The ear of flesh and blood becomes satiated with hearing, and the eye becomes satiated with seeing, but the eye of the Holy One is never sated of seeing, nor is his ear sated of hearing.' And on the verse, 'By terrible things in righteousness dost thou answer us,' the Midrash has a quaint discussion on the difference between prayer and repentance. One Rabbi says: 'The gates of prayer are sometimes open and sometimes shut, but the gates of repentance are always open. As the sea is never shut, but every one who wishes to bathe in it can bathe therein at any hour according to his will, so is it also with repentance. At all times when a man repents, the Holy One accepts his repentance, but for prayer there are fixed seasons and times.' But other Rabbis say: 'The gates of prayer are never shut likewise.'

§ 6. *The thirty-sixth Psalm.*—Perhaps the noblest and most spiritual praise of God in the whole Psalter is contained in a portion of Psalm xxxvi. The verses which now precede it, here omitted, may originally not have formed a part of the Psalm. Anyway, one is glad to have these five verses by themselves. I have also omitted the last three verses of the Psalm.

Thy lovingkindness, O Lord, is unto the heavens;
And thy faithfulness reacheth unto the skies.
Thy righteousness is like the mountains of God;
Thy judgements are like the great deep:
Man and beast thou savest, O Lord.

How precious is thy lovingkindness, O God!
The children of men take refuge under the shadow of thy wings.

They feast upon the fatness of thy house;
And thou makest them drink of the river of thy pleasures.
For with thee is the fountain of life:
Through thy light we see light.

It is a dragging down of the Psalmist's spirituality to suppose that he is here thinking of the material Temple with its sacrifices and peace-offerings. The fatness and the river are just as purely metaphorical as the fountain and the light. Suggested by existing ritual and vanished mythology, they refer solely to the spiritual and the unseen. I do not think that we should seek to explain too definitely the precise meaning of the final phrase of rapture: 'Through (or "in") thy light we see light.' Let us be careful lest an explanation in prose becomes prosaic. Could the poet have given a prosy paraphrase of his feeling? Such explanations are apt, as Mr. Casaubon said of motives, 'to become feeble in the utterance: the aroma is mixed with the grosser air.' It is better that each one of us should attempt to realize the meaning himself, to prove the statement's truth by feeling it. He who lives the life of righteousness and humility, with the love of God and man as its motive, will find the fullest truth in the Psalmist's words. When ordinary and average people are at their best, they will best appreciate them. God is the light of all our seeing; the saintly life reveals him most clearly, is most conscious of his presence and his grace.

§ 7. *The ninety-second Psalm: 'Bonum est confiteri.'*—The next Psalm of praise (xcii) is very familiar to us from its use in the Sabbath liturgy. That use is very old, as we may gather from the title, 'A song for the Sabbath day.' Israel is the speaker. The ethical teaching is not wholly satisfactory. The pious believers look with satisfied desire upon the overthrow of their foes. As the enemies of Israel were supposed to be the enemies of God, the triumph seemed religiously justified, but, as we know, this very justification was a hindrance to the doctrines of God's universal fatherhood and the fraternity of man.

It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord,
And to sing praises unto thy name, O most High:
To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning,
And thy faithfulness every night,
Upon an instrument of ten strings, and upon the harp;
Upon the sounding strings of the lyre.

For thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work:
I will triumph in the works of thy hands.
O Lord, how great are thy works!
And thy thoughts are very deep.
A brutish man knoweth not;
Neither doth a fool understand this:
When the wicked sprout as the grass,
And when all the workers of iniquity blossom,
It is that they may be destroyed for ever.

But thou, O Lord, art on high for evermore.
For, lo, thine enemies, O Lord,
For, lo, thine enemies shall perish;
All the workers of iniquity shall be scattered.
But my horn thou exaltest like the horn of a wild-ox;
I am anointed with fresh oil.
Mine eye also hath beheld (its desire) upon mine enemies,
And mine ears have heard (of the fall of) those that rose up against me.

The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree:
He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon.
Planted in the house of the Lord,
They shall flourish in the courts of our God.
They shall still bring forth fruit in old age;
They shall be full of sap and green;
To declare that the Lord is upright:
My rock, in whom there is no unrighteousness.

With many other scholars Professor Wellhausen regards the Psalm as the 'opening hymn' to the accession Psalms to which we have already listened.

'They (the righteous) shall still bring forth fruit in old age.' According to Professor Wellhausen this refers to 'Israel, which, at the very time when it seemed to be falling into decay, under Greek dominion, entered upon a second spring-tide, more glorious and important than its first under David.' If this interpretation be correct, the Psalm is Maccabean, and the 'prelude' would be later than the Psalms to which it is now prefixed. But it is quite as likely that the deliverance alluded to in the Psalm may be an earlier one. Again, 'a single great national mercy may be intended, or possibly a series of experiences' (Cheyne).

In our use of this Psalm we must change, like Beruria, the

sinners into sin, and the wicked into wickedness. Every triumph of righteousness is a sign of God. And because there is such a thing as righteousness, therefore God must be. And if God is, righteousness must prevail.

'That God, which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.'

§ 8. *The one hundred and thirty-ninth Psalm.*—The following Psalm (cxxxix) is one of the greatest in the Psalter. 'This Psalm is very glorious,' says Ibn Ezra, the great Jewish commentator and philosopher of the twelfth century; 'in these five books there is none like it.' Its subject is the omniscience and omnipresence of God, which at first and in contrast with his own limited knowledge is an almost terrifying thought to the Psalmist, but which at the end he appears to realize as the condition and the source of that inward support and illumination which God alone can give.

The noble grandeur and deep thought of this Psalm have been praised by many writers both ancient and modern. I will quote the comments of the *Four Friends*. 'No human pen or tongue has ever expressed more vividly or more profoundly the idea of the omnipresence of God. In all places, in all time, man is beset and encompassed by God; in him we live and move and have our being; our every thought is guided, our every thought controlled. But the thought produces no sense of oppression, no desire to escape from the eye of God. On the contrary, all is light and liberty. There is an undertone of bright acquiescence; an instinctive recognition by man's spirit of the inevitable control of the kindred Spirit of God, in whose likeness his own spirit was made. This calm satisfaction in the presence of God makes the whole Psalm one of the greatest lessons of life for all time. By its teaching we learn that it is only by rejoicing in that presence, by resting lovingly on that love, by clinging with childlike affection to the fatherly arms which surround us in life, which "ordered our days when as yet there was none of them,"—that man can fulfil the end of his being.'

Between the third and fourth stanzas there is in the original an outburst of hostility against the 'wicked,' Israel's enemies and God's. The four verses containing this outburst I have here omitted. Not that they are without connexion with the rest of the Psalm. It is no mere vulgar hatred of personal enemies that we find in this or indeed in any other portion of the Psalter. The

'enemies' are hated because, rightly or wrongly, they are supposed to be wicked, not merely because they are enemies. Hence the *Four Friends* are not unjustified when they proceed to say: 'This sense of the close dependence of man upon God and the possibility of close communion between the human and the divine spirit produces in the Psalmist the feeling which it always arouses when it breaks in all its fulness upon the soul. Evil in the soul and in the world around is felt to be appalling and intolerable. The mystery of iniquity becomes more and more unintelligible. What fellowship can there be between light and darkness? Surely God will "put on the garments of vengeance for clothing, and be clad with zeal as a cloak; according to their deeds will he repay them, fury to his adversaries and recompence to his enemies" (Isa. lix. 17, 18). Thus the apparently unconnected outburst at the close of the Psalm is seen to be in necessary connexion with the preceding meditation on God's ways. For desire for the reformation of the world and for the sanctification of the spirit, the longing to see the world verily the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and to be ourselves perfect even as our Father in heaven is perfect, is the necessary result in every man of a real conviction of God's presence in the world and in the soul.'

O Lord, thou hast searched me, and knowest me.
Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising,
  Thou understandeth my thought afar off.
Thou siftest my path and my lying down,
  And art familiar with all my ways.
For before a word is on my tongue,
  Lo, thou, O Lord, knowest it altogether.
Thou hast beset me behind and before,
  And laid thine hand upon me.
Such knowledge is too wonderful for me;
  It is too high; I cannot attain unto it.

Whither shall I go from thy spirit?
  Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there:
  If I make Sheol my bed, behold, thou art there.
If I should take the wings of the morning,
  And alight in the uppermost parts of the sea;
Even there would thy hand lead me,
  And thy right hand would hold me.
If I say, Let the darkness cover me,
  And night be the light about me:

Yet even darkness is not too dark for thee;
But the night shineth as the day;
The darkness is even as the light.

I give thanks unto thee, for thou art fearfully wonderful:
Marvellous are thy works;
And that my soul knoweth right well.
For thou didst form my reins:
Thou didst weave me together.
My bones were not hid from thee,
When I was made in secret,
And curiously wrought in the deeps of the earth.
Thine eyes did see my shapeless mass;
And in thy book all my days were written,
Even the days which were fashioned already,
When as yet there was none of them. (?)

How hard are thy thoughts unto me, O God!
How great is the sum of them!
If I would count them, they are more in number than the sand:
When I awake, I am still with thee.

Search me, O God, and know my heart,
Try me, and know my thoughts:
And see if there be any way of pain in me,
And lead me in a way everlasting.

'Thou hast beset me' (more literally, 'Thou hast shut me in'). Man is wholly within the purview and cognizance of God. He cannot do or think anything which God does not know.

'Such knowledge.' To understand this divine omniscience is too hard for me. It is by man inconceivable in its methods and operation.

'If I ascend up into heaven.' There is a curious phraseological parallel in Plato, perhaps, as Professor Cheyne observes, the Psalmist's contemporary. It is in a passage in the *Laws*, where Plato, in a semi-mythological manner, is speaking of the inevitable 'reward' or 'punishment' of the soul after the life on earth. 'If you say:—I am small and will creep into the depths of the earth, or I am high and will fly up to heaven, you are not so small or so high but that you shall pay the fitting penalty, either here or in the world below, or in some still more savage place whither you shall be conveyed.'

'And in thy book,' &c. A very obscure verse. The text is probably corrupt or incomplete, and the translation is most uncertain. The rendering adopted would mean that to God (for whom past, present and future are needless distinctions) the Psalmist's days were already foreknown, even before his birth.

'How hard are thy thoughts unto me!' Does this mean: Whereas God knows all man's thoughts and counsels, the purposes of God are mysterious and unknowable to man? Their complexity is no less crushing than their obvious unlimitedness in number. But many commentators take 'unto me' in close connexion with the adjective 'hard.' 'How weighty and mysterious are all thy purposes and thoughts in regard to me.' The divine purpose, even in respect to one single individual, is full of complexity. But in view of the strong expression 'more in number than the sand,' the other interpretation, according to which the Psalmist is referring to the incomprehensibility and infinitude of the divine thoughts as a whole or in general, seems easier and preferable.

'When I awake.' Apparently this means that the Psalmist fell asleep thinking about God and awoke with the same thoughts in his mind. But the text is very doubtful.

'Search me.' Finally, then, the Psalmist asks God to do what at the beginning he had asserted that God always does. He will trust in God completely. Nay more, he will ask for his help. For God's help is needed in order that the Psalmist may stand the test. The 'way of pain' is contrasted with the 'way everlasting.' The one means conduct which leads to suffering and death; the other means that course of action which maintains him who pursues it in life. A life after death is not alluded to, but both the thought and the wording show that men's minds were moving forward towards that larger hope.

§ 9. *Psalm one hundred and forty-five.*—The next hymn of praise, familiar to us from its prominent place in our liturgy, is an alphabetical Psalm, though one letter is wanting in the Hebrew (cxlv).

I will extol thee, my God, O king;
And I will bless thy name for ever and ever.
Every day will I bless thee;
And I will praise thy name for ever and ever.
Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised;
And his greatness is unsearchable.

One generation shall praise thy works to another,
And shall declare thy mighty acts.
They shall speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty,
And I will descant on thy wondrous works.
They shall speak of the might of thy terrible acts:
And I will declare thy greatness.
They shall abundantly utter the memory of thy great goodness,
And shall sing of thy righteousness.

The Lord is gracious, and full of compassion;
Slow to anger, and of great lovingkindness.
The Lord is good to all:
And his tender mercies are over all his works.
All thy works shall give thanks unto thee, O Lord;
And thy loving ones shall bless thee.
They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom
And talk of thy power;
To make known to the sons of men thy mighty acts,
And the glorious majesty of thy kingdom.
Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom,
And thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.

The Lord upholdeth all that fall,
And raiseth up all those that are bowed down.
The eyes of all wait upon thee;
And thou givest them their food in due season.
Thou openest thine hand,
And satisfiest every living thing with favour.
The Lord is righteous in all his ways,
And holy in all his works.
The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him,
To all that call upon him in truth.
He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him:
He will hear their cry, and will save them.
The Lord preserveth all them that love him:
But all the wicked will he destroy.
My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord:
And let all flesh bless his holy name for ever and ever.

This Psalm sums up the prevailing doctrine of the Psalmists and of Judaism about God. It is perfectly simple and straightforward;

given a belief in a 'personal' God, it is suited alike for the philosopher and the child. The only point we should desire to emend would be the penultimate verse, for our prayer and our hope are that there is no human wickedness which separates from God for ever. We believe in the ultimate purification of the wicked and not in his final and absolute annihilation. Perhaps too it might be added that though we know that many human beings have perished from want, yet none the less do we believe in the goodness of God. Human love and human goodness are no phantasm, no mirage, no unreality; their earthly antecedents cannot fully explain them, and still less can they explain them away. One thing alone is their true and sufficing explanation—an ultimate and eternal goodness, an ultimate and eternal love. And these are God.

§ 10. *The thirty-third Psalm: 'Exultate, justi.'*—The next Psalm (xxxiii) comes from the first collection, but has affinities with one at least of the five grand 'Hallelujah' hymns which conclude the Psalter. Therefore I have placed it immediately before them. A great deliverance has recently been wrought for Israel (so that the Psalm of praise is also a Psalm of thanksgiving). Is it the return from Babylon or, as Professor Cheyne thinks, a triumph of Maccabean heroes?

Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous:
For praise is comely for the upright.
Give thanks unto the Lord with the lyre;
Make melody unto him with the ten-stringed harp.
Sing unto him a new song;
Play skilfully with a loud noise.

For the word of the Lord is right;
And all his works are done in faithfulness.
He loveth righteousness and justice;
The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.
By the word of the Lord were the heavens made;
And all the host of them by the breath of his mouth.
He gathereth the waters of the sea together as in a bottle;
He layeth up the floods in store-rooms.
Let all the earth fear the Lord:
Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.
For he spake, and it was;
He commanded, and there it stood.

The Lord hath brought the purpose of the nations to nought:
He hath frustrated the devices of the peoples.
The purpose of the Lord standeth for ever,
The thoughts of his heart to all generations.
Happy is the nation whose God is the Lord;
And the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance.
The Lord looketh from heaven;
He beholdeth all the sons of men.
From the place of his habitation he looketh
Upon all the inhabitants of the earth:
He who fashioneth their hearts alike;
Who giveth heed to all their works.

A king is not saved by the multitude of an host:
A mighty man is not delivered by much strength.
An horse is a vain thing for safety:
Neither shall he deliver any by his great strength.
Behold, the eye of the Lord is upon them that fear him,
Upon them that hope for his lovingkindness;
To deliver their soul from death,
And to keep them alive in famine.
Our soul waiteth for the Lord:
He is our help and our shield.
For our heart shall rejoice in him,
Because we have trusted in his holy name.
Let thy lovingkindness, O Lord, be upon us,
According as we hope in thee.

'Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous.' This verse is put to very noble use in a striking passage in the Sifra, an old Midrashic commentary upon the Book of Leviticus. It says in that book, 'Ye shall keep my statutes and my judgements; which if *a man* do he shall live in them.' The Sifra goes on to observe: 'Rabbi Jeremiah says, Wouldest thou know whence we may infer that a heathen who does (i.e. follows) the Law is equal to the High Priest? Because it says, "which if *a man* do he shall live in them." And it does not say, "This is the law of the Priests or the law of the Levites or the law of Israel"; but it says, "This is the law of *man*, O Lord God" (playing upon 2 Sam. vii. 19). And it does not say, "Open ye the gates, that the Priests and Levites and Israelites may enter in"; but it says, "Open ye the gates, that

the righteous heathen may enter in" (Isa. xxvi. 2). And it does not say, "This is the gate of the Lord, the Priests and Levites and Israelites shall enter therein"; but it says, "This is the gate of the Lord, the righteous shall enter therein." And it does not say, "Rejoice, ye priests and Levites and Israelites in the Lord"; but it says, "Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous." And it does not say, "Do good, O Lord, to the Priests, to the Levites and to the Israelites"; but it says, "Do good, O Lord, unto *the good*" (Ps. cxxv. 4). Hence we may know that even a heathen who does the Law is equal to the High Priest.' I owe this passage to Professor Lazarus' new and interesting book, *Die Ethik des Judenthums.*

§ 11. *The one hundred and forty-sixth Psalm: 'Lauda, anima mea.'*—We come now to the last five Psalms of this my last group, which are also the last five Psalms in the Psalter (cxlvi–cl). They form a little group by themselves, and were probably written at one and the same period. The very reminiscences and borrowings which these Psalms contain from other hymns, themselves not among the oldest, point to this period being a late one in the history of Israel. Many scholars believe that they were written to commemorate glorious episodes in the story of the Maccabees. Note how in the first of these Psalms (cxlvi) the special 'mercy' which prompted the singer is nobly generalized in his song.

Praise ye the Lord.
  Praise the Lord, O my soul.
While I live I will praise the Lord:
  I will sing praises unto my God while I have my being.
Put not your trust in princes,
  Nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.
His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth;
  In that very day his thoughts perish.

Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help,
  Whose hope is in the Lord his God:
Who made heaven, and earth,
  The sea, and all that therein is:
Who keepeth truth for ever:
  Who executeth judgement for the oppressed:
  Who giveth food to the hungry.
The Lord looseth the prisoners;
  The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind.

The Lord raiseth them that are bowed down;
The Lord loveth the righteous.
The Lord preserveth the strangers;
He sustaineth the fatherless and widow;
But the way of the wicked he turneth aside.
The Lord shall reign for ever,
Even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations.
Praise ye the Lord.

'The Lord loveth the righteous.' The Midrash remarks: 'A man may wish to become a priest or a Levite, but he cannot, because his father was not one; but if he wishes to become righteous he can do so, even if he be a heathen, for righteousness is not a matter of descent. Thus it is written, "*House* of Aaron and *House* of Levi," but of them that fear God it says, "ye who fear the Lord, bless ye the Lord," and it does not say, "*House* of those who fear the Lord." For the Fear of the Lord is not a matter of inheritance, but of themselves men may come and love God, and God loves them in return. Therefore it says: "The Lord loveth the righteous."'

'The Lord preserveth the strangers.' The Psalmist gives in a few broad simple touches the main attributes of the God of goodness. It is interesting to find that the Greek translators render the Hebrew by *prosêlutoi*, proselytes. And in fact the Hebrew word *Gêrim* acquired in post-biblical Hebrew the meaning of *proselytes*. It is in that sense that the Midrash explains it. 'The Holy One loves the *Gêrim* exceedingly. To what is the matter like? To a king who had a flock of sheep and goats which went forth every morning to the pasture and returned in the evening to the stable. One day a stag joined the flock and grazed with the sheep, and returned with them. Then the shepherd said to the king: There is a stag which goes out with the sheep and grazes with them, and comes home with them. And the king loved the stag exceedingly. And he commanded the shepherd, saying: Give heed unto this stag, that no man beat it; and when the sheep returned in the evening, he would order that the stag should have food and drink. Then the shepherds said to him, My lord, thou hast many goats and sheep and kids, and thou givest us no directions about these, but about this stag thou givest us orders day by day. Then the king replied: It is the custom of the sheep to graze in the pasture, but the stags dwell in the wilderness, and it is not their custom to come among men in the cultivated land. But to this stag who has come to us and lives with us, should we not be grateful that he has left the

great wilderness, where many stags and gazelles feed, and has come to live among us? It behoves us to be grateful. So too spake the Holy One: I owe great thanks to the stranger, in that he has left his family and his father's house, and has come to dwell amongst us; therefore I order in the Law: Love ye the stranger (*Gêr*).'

§ 12. *The one hundred and forty-seventh Psalm: 'Laudate Dominum.'*—The second Psalm (cxlvii) of our five is little less general than the first, and yet it is perhaps equally prompted and conditioned by special events and even by a special season; a hard winter seems passing into a gentle spring.

Praise ye the Lord, for he is good;
  Make melody unto our God, for it is pleasant;
  Praise is seemly unto him.
The Lord buildeth up Jerusalem:
  He gathereth together the outcasts of Israel.
He healeth the broken in heart,
  And bindeth up their wounds.
He counteth the number of the stars;
  He calleth them all by their names.
Great is our Lord, and of great power:
  His understanding is infinite.
The Lord sustaineth the humble;
  He casteth the wicked down to the ground.

Sing unto the Lord with thanksgiving;
  Sing praise upon the lyre unto our God:
Who covereth the heaven with clouds,
  Who prepareth rain for the earth,
  Who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains.
Who giveth to the beast its food,
  And to the young ravens which cry.
He delighteth not in the strength of the horse:
  He taketh not pleasure in the legs of a man.
The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear him,
  In those that hope for his goodness.

Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem;
  Praise thy God, O Zion:
For he hath strengthened the bars of thy gates,
  He hath blessed thy children within thee.

He maketh peace in thy borders,
And satisfieth thee with the fat of wheat.
He sendeth forth his commandment unto the earth,
His word runneth very swiftly.
He giveth snow like wool,
He scattereth hoar frost like ashes.
He casteth forth his ice like crumbs;
Who can stand before his cold?
He sendeth out his word, and melteth them;
He causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow.
He declared his word unto Jacob,
His statutes and his ordinances unto Israel.
He hath not dealt so with any nation,
And as for his ordinances, they do not know them.
Praise ye the Lord.

The 'humble' are the Israelites; the 'wicked' are their heathen enemies. In the heat of fight and in the glory of triumph religion became fiercely national. But the one Lord of nature is the one Lord of man. And not merely the one Lord but the All-Father. A coalescence of religion and nation has often prevented the message of God in nature from reaching men's ears and minds. In the Maccabean age the enemies of Israel and Israel's religion were almost inevitably identified with the enemies of God. It was both patriotic and religious to fight for country and for God; could it be expected that the warriors who bled for their religion should bless those who sought to trample it under foot? If the oppressors sought to destroy the rites and the knowledge of the true God, his defenders gloried in the exclusive possession of both.

§ 13. *The one hundred and forty-eighth Psalm: 'Laudate Dominum de caelis, laudate eum in excelsis.'*—Now follows the famous psalm, widely known as the *Laudate Dominum in excelsis*, the grandest perhaps of all the Hymns of Praise (cxlviii). The general summons to all nature to the praise of God as the Lord of the Universe scarcely leaves the Psalmist room to celebrate the particular occasion which moved him to his appeal.

Praise ye the Lord.
Praise ye the Lord from the heavens,
Praise him in the heights.
Praise ye him, all his angels;
Praise ye him, all his hosts.

Praise ye him, sun and moon;
Praise him, all ye stars of light.
Praise him, ye heavens of heavens,
And ye waters that are above the heavens.
Let them praise the name of the Lord,
For he commanded and they were created;
He maintaineth them for ever and ever,—
He gave them a law which they cannot transgress.

Praise the Lord from the earth,
Ye monsters and all deeps;
Fire and hail, snow and smoke;
Stormy wind, fulfilling his word;
Mountains and all hills,
Fruit-trees and all cedars;
Wild beasts and all cattle,
Creeping things and winged birds;
Kings of the earth, and all peoples,
Princes and all judges of the earth;
Both young men and maidens,
Old men and children;
Let them praise the name of the Lord,
For his name alone is exalted,
His majesty is above the earth and the heaven.
And he hath lifted up a horn to his people,
A theme of praise for all his loving ones,
Even for the children of Israel, the people near unto him:
Praise ye the Lord.

§ 14. *The one hundred and forty-ninth Psalm: 'Cantate Domino.'*—Of the next Psalm (cxlix) the Maccabean origin and nature are clearly apparent. It shows us the religious strength and the religious weakness of the entire movement.

Praise ye the Lord.
Sing unto the Lord a new song,
And his praise in the congregation of his loving ones.
Let Israel rejoice in his Maker,
Let the children of Zion be joyful in their King.
Let them praise his name with the dance,
Let them make melody unto him with the timbrel and lyre.

For the Lord taketh pleasure in his people,
He adorneth the humble with victory.
Let the loving ones exult and give glory,
Let them sing aloud upon their beds.
Let the high praises of God be in their throat,
And a two-edged sword in their hand;
To execute vengeance upon the nations,
And punishments upon the peoples;
To bind their kings with chains,
And their nobles with fetters of iron;
To execute upon them the judgement written:
An honour this to all his loving ones:
Praise ye the Lord.

'Loving ones' or 'the pious' is an inadequate translation of the Hebrew *Chasidim*: 'saints' or 'holy ones' would be no better. The word *chesed* means kindness or lovingkindness, and this virtue is the special characteristic of God in his covenant relation to Israel, and of Israelites in their relation to each other and to God. In the Maccabean period, however, the *Chasidim* became the name of a party, as we shall hear in the next section. Professor Cheyne's note to the use of *Chasidim* in this Psalm runs thus: 'The word means, of course, those who display "lovingkindness" to their fellows as well as to Jehovah; but "who *is* my neighbour?" At the period of the Psalmist, love to God was more than ever preponderant over love to man.' It would perhaps be more just to say that war and persecution had inevitably dimmed the mind to the recognition of the bond which links man to man. Within the ranks of the *Chasidim* themselves there was no lack of brotherly affection.

The 'humble' or the 'afflicted' (cognate and interchangeable adjectives) has become a fixed term for Israel.

'The judgement written.' This probably refers to certain passages in the prophetical literature regarding the doom of the nations at the Messianic age. The danger of these lower and merely national vaticinations was now revealed. And this very Psalm was used to stimulate and justify appalling cruelties and massacres in the religious wars of the Reformation. Rightly do the *Four Friends* say that the 'use which has been made in later times of this and similar Psalms shows how easily devotion to the most sacred associations and zeal for the most spiritual religion may become the ministers of human prejudice and passion.'

§ 15. *The final Hallelujah: Psalm one hundred and fifty.*— And now we have arrived at the last Psalm of our group and

the last Psalm of the Psalter (cl). In it we breathe a purer air; we leave national limitations far below us. All flesh shall join in a common praise of the one Divine Father.

Praise ye the Lord,
Praise God in his sanctuary,
  Praise him in the firmament of his power;
Praise him for his mighty acts,
  Praise him according to his manifold greatness;
Praise him with the peal of the trumpet,
  Praise him with the harp and the lyre;
Praise him with the timbrel and dance,
  Praise him with strings and with pipe;
Praise him upon the loud cymbals,
  Praise him upon the high sounding cymbals;
Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord:
  Praise ye the Lord.

What nobler end for a Psalter than this; what nobler expression of adoring faith: 'Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord'!

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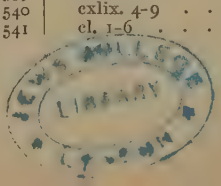

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